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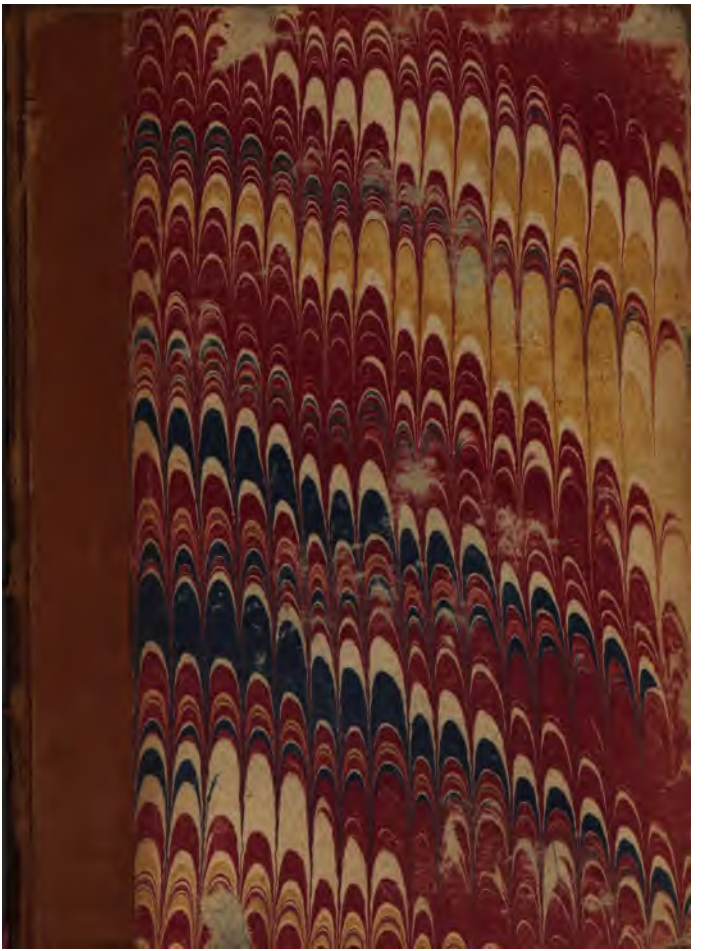
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TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFATORY REMARKS.

In the great events which have recently excited the wonder, and still fix the attention of all mankind upon France, ample justification is to be found for the introduction to the British public of any matter which bears any relation, however distant, to the occurrences now taking place: while the extension of knowledge, and the daily growth of a more perfect appreciation of international interests, thanks to the continuance of a long peace, and the exigencies of our commercial position, enable us to regard our great neighbour's proceedings with a sympathy very foreign to the sentiment entertained in the memory of many towards our "natural and hereditary enemy." The efforts of a people after liberty, must be matter for careful observation to every thinking mind, and of profound importance to every one imbued with a love of his fellow-creatures. And, various as may be the opinions and prophecies of men on the final establishment of public order and harmony

under the form of government now proposed by the leading spirits of the new Republic, none will be found to deny, that the eventual solution of the great problem is all important to the cause of progress, and the advancement of the mass of mankind to a happier and more satisfactory state of existence than that in which they are now placed. A great experiment is in course of performance; and, although the precious secret to be elaborated must pass many times through the fire, before it can attain anything like perfection; still, the wisdom attainable from experience of the past, the known boldness of the principal operators, and, above all, their perfect freedom from the trammels and shackles of existing institutions, vested rights, established usages, give them at least a fair field for the free adoption of any schemes most calculated to forward the views they profess to have at heart.

The provocative causes of the great French Revolution of 1789, and those of 1830 and '48, have a general, if not intimate affinity for each other. The points in common in the rulers, were the indecision and fatuity which reigned supreme in their councils, and which, displaying the impotence of the governments, paralysed the efforts even of the well-affected; and, by

giving the flush of first victory to the people, infused new courage and confidence into their leaders, and ended in the final subversion of the thrones, and the death or expulsion of the monarchs. The fate of Louis XVI. and his unhappy Queen, earned them, like Charles I., a sympathy, which their duplicity and disregard of public rights little merited. Had they lived, they had perhaps shared in the obloquy and contempt so generally felt and expressed for the exiles Charles X. and Louis Philippe; the contempt being chiefly ascribable to the irresolution and folly which characterized their last days of power. The unsuccessful seldom obtain the esteem of men; and although there may be, and are, many cases in which the result is a most unfair criterion of the sagacity and perseverance employed in the attainment of a desirable object, still, in the main, the verdict is a just one: for, the imperfect issue of an undertaking is tolerable evidence of the want of prescience, and of ability to meet circumstances, without which the attempt at anything of moment is mere rashness or speculation.

Notwithstanding that the Revolutions of 1789 and 1848 have so little in common in their proximate causes, or even in their mode

of manifesting public opinion, the objects aimed at by the great men of both epochs are precisely similar. The extension of electoral privileges, the formation of a representative government, the hatred of kingly power, the propagation of the principles of liberty, their avowed sympathy with all nations under a yoke similar to their own, the reformation of the system of taxation, the creation of national institutions and monuments, were all the ideas most prominent in the speeches and actions of the men of 1789, the leaders and the people. All these re-appear in their former vigour, in the resolutions of to-day. Then it was a dream: wherefore it turned out such, is beyond our limits to enquire or demonstrate; whether it shall assume a form coherent, now remains to be seen. Add to these engrossing topics another, which has been evolved by the growing intelligence of men's conditions and rights,—"the labour question," which forms, and will form, until some satisfactory settlement, the greatest question in all those countries where political institutions are sufficiently advanced to encourage the discussion of social imperfections, and the removal of those frightful inequalities which form at once the wonder, the disgrace, and danger of civilization. Meanwhile, I hope that the

"written portraits" of the leading men of those days,—drawn, too, by the graphic pen of Lamartine, the poet, historian, and statesman, of the new Republic,—will not be unacceptable. They are extracted from his history of the Girondists, already in course of translation, and made known to the English reading public, through the medium of an eminent publisher. And we hope, in this condensed shape, at once to bring before the reader the images of those who played no mean part on the world's stage, and thereby afford him an opportunity of comparing the men of the past and the present, and, by the parallel of their different characters, assist him to form an estimate and opinion of the success or destiny of those various opinions, now rife in France, which are all reproductions of theories tried in the balance and found wanting of effect, although they have shed sufficient seed to germinate and bring forth, as we now see.

The extension of knowledge, and the more intelligent appreciation of international relations, we have before alluded to; and the gradual decay of those patriotic prejudices which would have been so absurd, had they not been so natural, between nations plunged, by the

folly or wickedness of their rulers, in perpetual warfare and a reciprocity of injury, encourage us to hope for a favourable reception of this little work; and we trust it may give rise to a desire on the part of its readers, to examine impartially the views and the writings of the great authors and actors of the Revolution, which had, and still has, for its object, a change as well of ideas as of politics, and aims at no less than the social regeneration of mankind. A stigma, affixed by political opponents on the characters of men who ruled the destinies of nations, has long prevented most people from making a closer and more personal acquaintance with them. It is time that we should judge for ourselves. If they spoke truth, sullied though it were by the impurities of faction and self-seeking, let us adopt or admit it. If they were mere revolutionists, infidels, atheists, monsters in deed, and beings of crude and extravagant notions, let us at least have the satisfaction of entertaining such impressions of them from our own unbiassed investigation and deliberate judgment, and not from the traditions of our ancestors and their opponents.

March, 1848.

HEROIC CHARACTERS.

SUMMARY OF THE REVOLUTION.

The Revolution was but of five years' date. These five years are five ages for France. Never perhaps in this world, at any epoch since the incarnation of the Christian idea, had any land produced in so brief a space a like eruption of ideas, of men, of natures, of characters, of geniuses, of talents, of catastrophes, of crimes, or of virtues, as during that convulsive elaboration of the social and political feature, then designated by the name of France: neither the era of Cæsar and Octavius in Rome; nor the age of Charlemagne, among the Gauls and in Germany; nor the epoch of Pericles at Athens; nor of Leo X. in Italy, nor that of Louis XIV. in France, nor the days of Cromwell in England. We might say, that earth, in labour with the progressive order of society, is making an effort of fecundity, adequate to the energetic work of regeneration that Providence seeks to accomplish. Men arise as the instantaneous impersonations of all that is to be thought, said, or done.—Voltaire, of good sense; Jean Jacques Rousseau, of the ideal; Condorcet, calculation; Mirabeau, the thunderbolt; Vergniaud, its trans-

port; Danton, audacity; Marat, fury; Madame Roland, enthusiasm; Charlotte Corday, vengeance; Robespierre, Utopia; Saint Just, the fanaticism of the Revolution. And behind them, the second-rate men of each of these groups form a bundle, that the Revolution unties, after doing them together, breaking the sticks like worn-out tools. Light breaks in at all points of the horizon, and at once: darkness retires. Prejudices are dissipated; consciences enfranchised; tyrants tremble. The people arise, and thrones crumble into dust. Europe, alarmed, advances to strike, and, wounded herself, retreats to contemplate the great spectacle from afar. This combat to the death, in the cause of human reason, is a thousand-fold more glorious than the victories of the armies which succeed it. It wins from the world inalienable truths, in place of winning from a nation precarious increase of territories. It enlarges the domain of 'MAN,' in place of extending the boundaries of a people; and, for glory, it has martyrdom; for ambition, virtue. How proud one is to be of a race to whom Providence has given it to conceive such thoughts, and to be the child of an age that has given the onward impulse to such movements of the human mind. We glorify France in her intelligence, her destiny, her soul, her blood! The heads of these men fall one by one; some justly, some unjustly: but they all fall for a purpose. The individuals may be accused or absolved, accursed or deplored, innocent or guilty, affect-

ing or odious, victims or executioners;—it is the action that is grand,—the idea ranges above its instruments, as the cause, ever pure, amid the horrors of the battle-plain. After five years, the Revolution is no more than a vast grave-yard. On the tomb of each victim is written some word which characterises him :—*philosophy* or *eloquence;* mayhap, *genius;* on another, *courage:* here, *crime;* there, *virtue.* But on all it is inscribed,—'Died for the future, and labourer for human nature.'

A nation should, doubtless, bewail her dead, and not be comforted for a single head unjustly and odiously sacrificed; but she must not regret her blood shed for the development of eternal truths. God has put this price on the germination and fructification of his designs for man. Ideas vegetate by human blood; revolutions descend from the scaffold. All religions are sanctified by their martyrs.

* * * * *

The history of the Revolution is glorious, yet mournful; like the morrow of a victory, and the eve of another engagement. But, if this history be full of mourning, it is especially full of faith. It resembles the antique drama, where, during the recitative by the narrator, the chorus of people chants glory, bewails the victims, and raises a hymn of consolation and hope to the gods!

The parties that divided the country after the death of Mirabeau, were thus composed: without;—the Assembly, the court, and the

Jacobins; within;—the *côté droit*, the *côté gauche*; and between those two extreme parties, the one fanatic of innovations, the other fanatic of resistance, an intermediate party. It was composed of all the men of wealth and peace, who had belonged to the others: their weak faith, undecided between revolution and conservatism, would have shown, that the one should prevail without violence, and that the other should concede without resentment. They were the philosophers of the Revolution. But it was no longer the season for philosophy: the hour of victory had arrived. The two ideas, once face to face, demanded combatants, not judges: these men were crushed in the shock. Let us set down the chiefs of these various parties, and make their acquaintance, before seeing them act.

The *Côté droit* in the National Assembly comprised the natural enemies of the movement,—the nobility and high clergy. All were not, however, of the same rank, nor of the same title. Seditions originate from below, revolutions from above: sedition is but the wrath of a people, revolution is the idea of an epoch. The French revolution was a generous thought of the aristocracy.* This fancy had fallen into

*That the French Revolution might have had some part of its origin in the philosophical and free-thinking discussions of the saloons, may be true. But that it was ever a "generous" thought of the aristocracy, I much question. The trenchant sarcasm of Voltaire, and the social disquisitions of Rousseau, might have exposed the hollowness of the system as it was; but any idea of reform entertained by the nobility, probably extended to nothing

the people's hands, who had converted it into an engine against the nobility, the throne, and religion. Philosophy in the saloons, it had become revolt in the streets. Meanwhile, all the great houses of the kingdom had sent forth apostles of the first dogmas of the Revolution: the States General, ancient theatre of the consequence and the triumphs of the *haute noblesse*, had tempted the ambition of their successors: they had marched in the van of the reformers. *Esprit de corps* had not weighed, when there was a question of coalition with the *tiers état*. The Montmorencies, the Noailles, the La Rochefoucaulds, the Clermont Tonnerres, Lally Tolendals, Virieu d'Aiguillons, Lauzuns, Montesquieus, Lameths, the Mirabeaus, the Duke of Orleans, the first prince of the blood, the Count of Provence, the King's brother, himself a king subsequently, as Louis XVIII.,*

further than the abolition of certain obnoxious privileges, and other tyranical practices affecting themselves. They had no feeling in common with the people. The great families whose sons were among *the apostles*, were not favourers of popular demands. The reforms needed were of a system, not of matter or detail. The State must be reorganized. The American war set the people thinking; the necessity of some reform was obvious; the King was weak enough to convoke the States, and it was by the *tiers état*, especially the rural clergy, that the first masterstroke of the Revolution was given. I am aware of the prodigal abandonment of their privileges by the nobility, in the first Assembly, but the *first idea* of Revolution did not emanate with them.—Tr.

* How many of these were actuated by other than motives of personal ambition, or private spleen, in the course they pursued? Louis XVIII. himself, who afterwards had the power, was an instance of indifference to the wants and rights of the community.—Tr.

had concurred in the impulsive movement to the boldest innovations. They had all borrowed their credit of a few hours' duration, from principles which it was more easy to lay down than to controul: the majority of their credits had disappeared. So soon as these theorists of speculative revolution were conscious that the torrent was carrying them away with it, they had sought in vain to retrace their steps in the stream, or they had quitted its course: some had ranged themselves anew round the throne, others had emigrated after the days of the fifth and sixth of October. Some, again, more firm, remained at their post in the National Assembly. They fought hopelessly, but gloriously, for a fallen cause: they strained their nerves to maintain at any rate a monarchical power, and abandoned to the people without dispute the rights of the nobility and the church. Of this party were Cazalès, the Abbé Maury, Malhouet, and Clermont Tonnerre. They were the remarkable orators of this moribund party.

Clermont Tonnerre and Malhouet were rather statesmen than orators: their sure and reflecting addresses bore the impress only of reason. They were in search of the equilibrium between liberty and monarchy; and thought they had discovered it in the English system of the two houses. The moderate men, of both parties, listened respectfully to their voices; like all half-measure and half-ability men, they excited neither anger nor hatred; but events would not listen to them, and,

leaving them behind, advanced towards more absolute results. Maury and Cazalés, less philosophical, were the two champions of the *côté droit;* their nature was different, their oratorical power almost equal. Maury represented the clergy, of which he was a member; Cazalés, the nobility, whose side he espoused. The former, early trained in the contests of sacred polemics, had sharpened and polished in the pulpit the eloquence he was to carry to the tribune Sprung from the lower ranks of the people, he belonged to the old *régime* only from his cloth. He defended religion and monarchy, like two texts prescribed for his discourses. His conviction was theatrical; any other part would have suited him equally well. But he sustained all that his position required, with a fine character and admirable courage. Formed by serious studies, endowed with an abundant, lively, and glowing elocution, his harangues were complete treatises on the topics he took up. Mirabeau's only rival, he only wanted a more national and a truer cause, to become his equal; but the sophisms of abuses could not be dressed up in more specious colours than those Maury threw around the old *régime.* His historical and sacred erudition supplied him with arguments. The hardihood of his character and of his language inspired him with words which almost avenge defeat. His fine figure, sonorous voice, imperious action, the gaiety and carelessness with which he braved the tribunes, often won..

him the applause even of his opponents. The people, knowing their own invincible strength, were amused by his impotent struggles. To them Maury was one of those gladiators one likes to see engaged, although we know they must die. One thing only was deficient in the Abbé Maury,—authority of speech. Neither his parentage, his faith, nor his manners, inspired those who heard him with respect. They detected the actor in the man; the advocate, in the cause. The orator and his speech were not one. Strip the Abbé Maury of his cassock, he would have changed sides without effort, and taken his seat among the innovators. Such orators ornament a party, but they do not save it.

Cazalés was one of those who do not know themselves, until the hour when circumstances, in assigning them a duty, reveal their own genius. An obscure officer in the army, the chances that brought him to the tribune disclosed to him that he was an orator. He did not pause to enquire what cause he should defend—as a noble, nobility; royalist, the King; as subject, the throne. His position made his doctrine. He brought to the Assembly the character and the virtues of his uniform. Speech was to him only another sword; with chivalric devotion he dedicated it to the cause of monarchy. Indolent, ill-educated, his rapid good sense stood him in place of study. His monarchical faith was not the fanaticism of the past; it admitted modifications, admitted by

the King himself, and compatible with the inviolability of the throne, and agency of the executive. Between Mirabeau and him, the space was not great; but the one desired liberty as an aristocrat, the other as a democrat. The one had thrown himself among the people, the other stood on the steps of the throne. The character of Cazalés' eloquence was that of a desperate cause. He protested more than he argued; to the violent triumphs of the *côté gauche* he opposed his ironical defiance, or poured forth his bitter indignation, which sometimes led captive their admiration, but never carried off victory. Nobility owed it to him to fall with glory, and the throne with majesty; and in him eloquence assumed a touch of heroism.

* * * * *

The *côté gauche* had just lost at once their chief and moderator, in Mirabeau; the man of the nation was no more. The men of party remained,—Barnave and the two Lameths. These men, humiliated by the ascendancy of Mirabeau's genius, had been essaying, long before his death, to balance the sovereignty of his genius, by the exaggeration of their doctrines and discourses. Mirabeau was only the apostle; they had wished to be the factious of the day. Jealous of his person, they had thought to efface his talents, by their superior popularity. Mediocre intellects think to equal genius, by exceeding reason. A schism, of from thirty to forty voices, had been effected in the *côté gauche;* Barnave and the Lameths

inspired it. The club of "the friends to the constitution," now "the Jacobins," responded to them without. Popular agitation was raised by them; kept down by Mirabeau, who rallied against them the *gauche*, the *centre*, and the reasonable members of the *côté droit*, they conspired and caballed; they fomented divisions of opinion, rather than governed in the Assembly. Mirabeau's death left the vacancy free to them.

The Lameths, men of the court, brought up by the kindness of the royal family, loaded with favours and pensions by the King, had all the notorious defection of Mirabeau, without his grievances as their excuse, but this defection was one of their titles to popular favour. Able men, they brought to the national cause the manœuvres of the courts they had been brought up in. Their love of revolution was, however, disinterested and sincere; but their distinguished abilities did not equal their ambition. Crushed by Mirabeau, they banded against him all those who, like themselves, were eclipsed by the shadow of that great man. They sought out a rival to oppose to him; they only found his detractors. Barnave appeared; they surrounded him, applauded him, and intoxicated him with his own consequence. They persuaded him, in a moment, that phrases were politics, and that a rhetorician must be a statesman.

Mirabeau was great enough not to fear, and just enough not to despise him. Barnave, a

young lawyer from Dauphiny, had come out with some success in the conflicts between the Parliament and the Throne, which had agitated his province, and exercised on these petty theatres the eloquence of the barrister. Sent, at the age of thirty, to the States General, with Mounier his patron and master, he had promptly abandoned Mounier and the Monarchical party, to signalise himself on the Democratic side. An unlucky expression, escaping from his lips, not from his heart, weighed like a load of remorse on his conscience. "Is the blood so pure, then, that is flowing?" cried he, at the first murder of the Revolution. This expression had marked him on the brow with the sign of the factious. Barnave was not so, or he was only so, as far as it was requisite for the success of his speeches. He had no extreme in him, save as a speaker: the man had it not; he was still less cruel. Studious, but without ideas, discreet, but without warmth, it was a medium intelligence—an honest mind, a fluctuating will, a heart in the right place. His talent, which they used to affect to compare with Mirabeau's, was only the art of connecting common considerations with skill. The habits of the tribunal gave him, in improvisation, an apparent superiority, which was dissipated on reflection. Mirabeau's enemies made him a pedestal of their hate, and had exalted him to compare it. When he was reduced to his real size, they admitted all the distance between the man of action and the

man of the bar. Barnave had the misfortune to be the great man of a mean party, and the hero of a malignant party: he deserved a better fate, and, at a later period, conquered it.

Robespierre, who had often engaged Mirabeau, in concert with Dupont, the Lameths, and Barnave, began to secede from them, so soon as they ruled the Assembly. He formed, in conjunction with Péthion and some obscure names, a knot of small, radically democratic oppositionists, who encouraged the Jacobins outside, and menaced Barnave and the Lameths every time they attempted to stand still. Péthion and Robespierre in the assembly, Brissot and Danton in the club of the Jacobins, formed the germ of the new party, which was about to accelerate the movement, and to convert it into convulsions and catastrophes.

Péthion was the La Fayette of the people, —popularity was his object: he attained it more rapidly than Robespierre. An advocate without talent, but upright,—borrowing from philosophy nothing more than the sophisms of the social contract,—young, handsome, patriotic,—he was destined to become one of those complaisant idols, with all whom, excepting one, the people did as it pleased; his credit in the streets and at the Jacobins', gave him a certain authority in the Assembly; they listened to him as a significant echo of the wills out of doors.—Robespierre affected to respect him.

The ruling club was that of the Jacobins; this club was the rallying point of anarchy. The instant a powerful and impassioned will arouses a people, this common will draws men into intimate connexions; individualism ceases, and legal or illegal associations organize the public passion. The popular societies were formed at the first threats of the court to the States General, in this wise.—Some Breton deputies met at Versailles, and formed a society to expose the plots of the court, and to assure the triumphs of liberty; its founders were Sièyes, Chapelier, Barnave, Lameth. After the days of the 5th and 6th of October, the Breton Club, removing to Paris, in the train of the National Assembly, assumed there the more expressive title of "the Society of the Friends of the Constitution." They sat in the ancient convent of the Jacobins, St. Honoré, not far from the *manége*, where the National Assembly were sitting. The deputies, who had, in the beginning, founded it for themselves alone, soon threw open their doors to the journalists, the revolutionary writers, and finally, to all citizens. Presentation by two members of the society, and an open scrutiny into the morality of the candidate, were the only conditions of admission. The public was admitted to the sittings by censors, who inspected the entrance-ticket. A set of rules, an office, a president, a correspondence department, secretaries, an order of the day, a tribune,

orators, transferred into all these meetings the forms of deliberating assemblies. They were the assemblies of the people, *minus* election and responsibility. Passion alone gave the mandate. In place of making laws, they made opinion.

The meetings took place in the evening, in order that the people might not be prevented from assisting in them by the business of the day. The acts of the National Assembly, the events of the moment, the examination of social questions, more frequently accusations against the King, his ministers, the *côté droit*,—were the texts of their discussions. Of all the passions of the people, that which was most flattered was hatred. They rendered it distrustful, in order to enslave it; and accordingly, convinced that all were conspiring against them,—the King, Queen, court-ministers, authority, foreign powers,—they threw themselves, in despair, into the arms of their defenders. The most eloquent, in their eyes, was he who infused the most fear into them; they thirsted for denunciations, which were supplied in abundance. It was thus that Barnave, the Lameths, and afterwards Danton, Marat, Brissot, Camille Desmoulins, Robespierre, Péthion, had gained their authority over the people. These names had mounted with the public wrath; they maintained this same wrath, to continue great. The nightly meetings of the Jacobins and Cordeliers oftentimes smothered the echo of the sittings of the National

Assembly; the minority, beaten at the *manége*, came to protest, accuse, and threaten, at the Jacobins!

Mirabeau, himself accused by Lameth, in reference to the law on emigration, had come, a few days before his end, to hear, in person, the invectives of his denouncer, and had not disdained to justify himself. The clubs were the force without, on which the leaders of the Assembly rested their names, to intimidate the national representation. National representation had only the laws; the clubs had the people, sedition, and even the army.

The Cordeliers, who have been sometimes confounded with the Jacobins, surpassed them in turbulence and demagoguism; Marat and Danton ruled them.

Public opinion, thus organised in all parts of the empire, communicated, like an electric shock, that nothing could withstand. The repercussion of a motion made at Paris was felt from club to club, to the extremities of the land. One spark lighted up, at the same hour, the same passion in millions of minds.

. . . . One body alone upheld the shadow of the throne and external order—the National Guard of Paris. But the National Guard was a neutral power, receiving no law but that of opinion; and itself, fluctuating between the factions and the monarchy, could easily maintain safety in the public places, but could hardly serve as the firm and independent

support to a political power. It was a people in itself: all serious intervention adverse to the will of the people would have appeared a sacrilege. It was a body of municipal police; it could never be the army of the throne, or of the constitution: it was self-born on the day of the 14th July on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville; it took orders only from the municipality.

[This description seems intended for the National Guard of 1848. We have recently seen the epithet of Prætorians applied to the National Guard, in articles of a well-known contemporary periodical—no new term of reproach, by the way, but the renewal of old antipathies. We may be excused for dissenting from the high authority even of Blackwood on such a subject, the term being inapposite, both in the origin of the respective corps, and in their subsequent conduct, from which it is sought to deduce the resemblance. The Prætorian bands were foreign mercenaries, levied by the tyrants of Rome for the maintenance of their personal government, and their protection from all resistance or revolt of the people against the encroachments of the emperors on popular liberty, and the very limited free institutions still preserved to the Romans. As the government decreased in vigour, the importance of these guards increased, till at length, like the Janissaries, their assent became a necessary ingredient to the inauguration of a sovereign; whom, as a necessary consequence, they deposed and put to death, when he ceased to pander to their tastes, or when his conduct became in any way offensive. The

National Guard, on the other hand, was a creation of the people at the commencement of the Revolution, expressly instituted for the protection of their rights and privileges. They owed no allegiance to the crown, were under no contract, express or implied, to forward its views; and, consequently, their recent defection from Louis Philippe was the result of popular disapprobation, and bears no resemblance to the mutinous disaffection of the Imperial Prætorians.]

MIRABEAU.

[The greatest actor in the Revolution, compiler of the declaration "*of the Rights of Man*," who, by his fierce denunciations of the aristocracy, the fire of his eloquence, the splendour of his prodigality, and the extent of his profligacy, drew the eyes of all mankind on him during his public career, and yet was never equal to the great crisis he had so much contributed to precipitate. Of him it may be said, that the embarrassment and inconvenience caused him by his vices, added to the reality of his great abilities and the insignificant field afforded him at court by the offence his unblushing notoriety of character gave, (for one of the most earnest endeavours of the Court of France was always to keep up a semblance of decency, when the thing itself had long been extinct,) made him a discontented Noble: while a sense of natural justice, aided by a sense of personal oppression, no doubt induced him to throw himself into the arms of the popular party, by whom the accession of such an ally was gladly hailed. Still he was never truly a democrat: though his reason was with the people, his heart was true to the influence of birth and former station; added to which, his profusion ever kept him needy; and no efforts were spared, when it was too late, to procure his secession from his party. Lamartine says, notwithstanding his venality, "his genius was incor-

ruptible," a truth—for at the very moment when he was receiving 20,000 fr. a month from the King, he yet preserved his independence of action and opinion, and would not be controlled as to the manner in which he should effect the object; and his was the voice that pronounced the memorable message to the King, on occasion of his directing the adjournment of the Assembly, "Go, tell your master, that we are here by the power of the people, and that we will not go hence but by force of bayonet."]

Mirabeau was just dead. The instinct of the people caused them to crowd around the house of their tribune, as if to ask inspiration at his bier: but Mirabeau, in life, could no longer have imparted it. His genius had paled its fire before that of the Revolution: hurried on to an inevitable precipice by the very car he had himself driven, he clung to the tribune in vain. The last memorials addressed by him to the King, which the iron chest has preserved to us, together with the secret of his venality, display the depression and discouragement of his mental powers.* His counsels are changeable,

* The history of the Iron Chest here alluded to, is this.—In his hours of leisure, the King relieved himself from the cares of the throne by handicraft, and he was an excellent locksmith. To acquire perfection in this art, he had, about ten years previously, admitted to his familiarity a locksmith, named Gamain. The King and the mechanic were friends, like men who pass their hours together, and exchange thoughts in intimacy. Louis XVI. believed in the fidelity of his associate, and confided to him the care of working out a recess, in the thickness of the wall of an obscure corridor that led to his apartment, which was closed with an iron door, and ingeniously concealed by

incoherent, almost puerile. One while he will stay the Revolution with a grain of sand; then he places the safety of the monarchy in a proclamation from the crown, and in a royal ceremony suited to make the King popular. Again, he will buy the applause of the tribunes, and fancies the nation to be saleable with them. The littleness of these means of safety contrasts with the growing immensity of the dangers. Disorder is in his ideas. You perceive that he has been carried away by the passions he has excited, and that, powerless to control, he betrays, yet cannot ruin them. This great agitator is nothing but a frightened courtier who seeks safety under the throne, and who babbling these terrible words, — "the *nation and liberty*," which are set down in his part, has already contracted in his head all the littleness

wood carving. In that the King buried his important political papers, and the secret correspondence he had kept up with Mirabeau, Barnave, and the Girondins. He thought the heart of Gamain as faithful, and as silent, as the wall he had charged with his secrets. Gamain was a traitor, and denounced more than his King,—he denounced his comrade and friend. One day Gamain feeling athirst, the King had given him a glass of iced water, and about this period the first symptom of consumption showed itself; and a suspicion of poison, fomented by the insinuations of his wife, a thorough anti-royalist, so worked upon him, that, in revenge, he betrayed the secret repository to Roland when Minister of the Interior, who was rash enough to take the sole responsibility on himself of opening it,—a step which essentially contributed to his own ruin, and deprived the documents of half their authenticity, for it was generally affirmed, that some of those produced had been fabricated, while others affecting his party had been withdrawn. The proofs of Danton's tergiversation had been removed long previously.

and all the vanity of the court's thoughts. Genius excites pity, when one sees it at issue with impossibility. Mirabeau was the most powerful man of the day; but the greatest of men, struggling against the elements in their rage, seems no better than a madman. The fall is majestic, only when we fall with virtue.

Poets tell us that clouds take the form of the countries they pass over, and, descending on the vallies, plains, or mountains, preserve their imagery, and carry them through the skies. Such is the image of certain men, whose, if I may use the term, collective genius models itself on their epoch, and incarnates in them all the individuality of a nation. Mirabeau was such an one. He did not invent, he manifested the Revolution. Without him, it would possibly have remained in a state of idea and tendency. He came, and in him it took the form, passion, language, which make a crowd exclaim, on seeing something,—"There it is!"

He was born a gentleman of ancient family, refugees, and established in Provence, but originally from Italy. The source was Tuscan. This family was one of those that Florence had repulsed from her bosom, in the storms of liberty, and for whose persecution and exile Dante reproaches his country in such bitter strains. The blood of Machiavel, and the genius imbuing the Italian republic, were united in all the individuals of this race. The proportions of their souls were above their destiny. Vices, passions, virtues, all are beyond measure.

The women are angelic, or perverted; the men sublime or depraved; the very language is as marked and grandiloquent as their natures. There is, in their most intimate correspondence, the colouring and harmony of the heroic dialects of Italy. Mirabeau's ancestors speak of their domestic affairs much as Plutarch does of the dissensions of Marius and Sylla, of Cæsar and Pompey. We see great men lost in little things. Mirabeau breathed this domestic majesty and manhood from his cradle. I dwell on these details, which seem foreign to my history, yet explain it. The source of genius is often in a race, and family is oftentimes the prophetess of destiny.

Mirabeau's education was rough, and cold as the hand of his father, who was styled "the friend of man,"* albeit his unquiet spirit and egotistical vanity made him the persecutor of his wife and the tyrant of his children. All the virtue he learnt was comprised in the word honour. Such was the title, then, of that parade of virtue, which was often only the outward show of probity, and the elegance of vice. Taking service at an early age, he only acquired from military manners a taste for libertinism and gambling. The father's hand was always outstretched, not to assist him, but to crush him, under the consequences of his delinquencies. His youth is passed in State prisons, his pas-

* The Marquis de Mirabeau wrote a work entitled, "*L'ami de l'homme.*"

sions are envenomed by solitude, his genius sharpened against the bars of his dungeon; his mind loses there all modesty, which but rarely survives the infamy of precocious punishment. On his release from prison, for the purpose of attempting, by his father's directions, a difficult marriage with Mdlle de Marignan, a rich heiress of one of the great houses of Provence, he practised, like a wrestler, the stratagem and daring of politics on the limited stage of Aix,—cunning, seduction, bullying. He employs all his resources to accomplish his attempt. He did succeed; but scarcely is he married, ere new persecutions overtake him, and the strong chateau of Pontarlier opens its gates to receive him. An *amour* rendered immortal by the *Lettres à Sophie* imprisoned him. He carried off Mad. de Mounier from her old husband. The lovers, happy, for some months take refuge in Holland. They are arrested, separated, locked up, the one in a convent, the other in the donjon of Vincennes. Love, which like fire in the veins of the earth, is always detected in some fold of great men's destinies, lights up at one sole and ardent altar all the passions of Mirabeau. In vengeance, his outraged love is appeased; in liberty he rejoins and delivers love: in the study it is still love that he illustrates. Entering his dungeon obscure, he issues from it a writer, orator, statesman; but abandoned, ready for anything, even to sell himself, to buy fortune and celebrity.

The drama of life is conceived in his brain;

he only needs a stage, and time is preparing one for him. In the interval of a few years which roll on between his exit from the donjon of Vincennes and the tribune of the National Assembly, he accumulates polemical works that would have exhausted any other man, and which merely served to keep him in good wind. The Bank of St. Charles, the Institutions of Holland, the work in Prussia, the boxing-match with Beaumarchais; his style and his part, these great pleadings on questions of war, the balance of Europe, finance, those biting invectives, those deeds of words with the ministers or the popular men of the moment, already smack of the Roman forum in the days of Clodius and Cicero. We detect the antique model in modern controversies. We hear in fancy the first rumbling of that popular tumult so soon to explode, and which his voice is to controul. At the first election of Aix, contemptuously rejected by the nobility, he throws himself among the people, sure of weighing down the balance wheresoever he shall throw the weight of his boldness and his genius. Marseilles disputes the great plebeian with Aix. His two elections, his discourses, the addresses he composes, the energy he displays, occupy all France. His resounding periods become the proverbs of the revolution. By comparing himself in his sonorous phrases with the men of old, he places himself in the popular imagination at the height of the characters he desires to call to mind. They get accustomed to confound him with the

names he cites. He makes great noise, to prepare men's minds for great commotions: he declares himself haughtily to the nation, in the sublime apostrophe of his address to the Marseillais. "When the last of the Gracchi expired, he threw up dust towards heaven: from this dust arose Marius!—Marius, less great for having exterminated the Cimbri than for having thrown down the aristocracy of the nobility in Rome."

From the first moment of his entry into the National Assembly, he filled it; there, he is the entire people. His gestures are order; his motions, *coups d' état.* He sets himself on a level with the throne. The nobility feel themselves vanquished by this new power issuing from themselves. The clergy, who are the people, and are seeking to re-establish democracy in the Church, lend him their support, to undermine the double aristocracy of nobility and episcopacy. In a few months, down falls all that has been building and cementing for centuries. Mirabeau alone is left, amid the ruins. His part of tribune is played out: that of statesman begins. He is greater in that than in his former one. There, where every one is feeling his way, he marches right on—strikes at once: the Revolution, in his brain, is no longer a gust of passion,—it is a plan. The philosophy of the eighteenth century, accelerated by the prudence of the politician, flows from his lips in all its form. His eloquence, commanding like the law, is no longer more than the talent

of impassioning reason. His words illumine everything: almost alone at that moment, he has the courage to continue alone. He braves envy, hatred, and murmuring, relying on the sense of his own superiority. He disdainfully dismisses the passions that have accompanied him hitherto; he wishes them no more from the hour that his cause ceases to require them; he speaks henceforth to men only in the name of his genius. This title is sufficient to procure him obedience. The assent that truth commands is his power. His strength returns to him by the counter-stroke. He raises himself among all the parties, and towers above them. All detest him because he sways them; and all covet him because he can ruin or serve them. He gives himself to none, yet treating with all: impassible, he sets up, on the tumultuous element of that assembly, the basis of the reformed constitution, legislation, finance, diplomacy, war, religion, political economy, balance of power; he takes up and he solves all the questions as an Utopian but a politician. The solution he adduces is ever the exact mean between ideal and practical. He brings reason to the level of manners, and institutions in relation with habits. He desires a throne to support democracy; he desires liberty in the chambers; and the will of the nation one and irresistible in the government. The character of his genius, so defined and so misunderstood, is still less that of audacity than of justice. Under majesty of expression, he has the infalli-

bility of good sense. His very vices cannot prevail over the clearness and the sincerity of his understanding. At the foot of the tribune he is a man without modesty, without virtue; in the tribune he is an honest man. Abandoned to his private dissipation, subsidized by foreigners, sold to the court to satisfy his expensive tastes, he yet keeps, in this shameful traffic of his character, the incorruptibility of his genius. Of all the levers of a great man over the age he lived in, he lacked none save honesty. The people are not his religion, they are his instrument: his God is glory, his faith posterity; his conscience is in his mind—the fanaticism of his idea is quite human; the cold materialism of his time deprives his soul of the motive, the aim, the power of things imperishable. He dies with the words "Bind me up in perfumes, and crown me with flowers, to enter on my eternal sleep." He is all for time; impressing on his handiwork nought of the infinite. No immortal sign makes holy his character, his acts, or his thoughts. Had he believed in God, he might, perhaps, have died a martyr; as it was, he would have left behind him the religion of reason and the reign of democracy. In a word, Mirabeau is the *reason* of a people: we have yet to come to the *faith* of mankind!

Magnificent forms threw a veil of universal mourning over the private sentiments inspired among the various parties by his decease. While bells were tolling, and minute-guns pealing,

—while, in a ceremony which was assembling 200,000 spectators, the obsequies of a king were granted to a simple citizen; and when the Pantheon they were bearing him to, seemed scarcely suitable for such ashes,—what was passing in the inner hearts of men?

The King, who kept the eloquence of Mirabeau in his pay; the Queen, with whom he had had nocturnal conferences, regretted him, perchance as a last instrument of safety; withal, he inspired in them less of confidence than terror; and the sense of humiliation in the crown requiring aid at the hands of its subject, must have been comforted by that power of destruction which was falling of itself before the throne. The court was avenged by death for the affronts it had undergone. The irritated aristocracy preferred his fall to his services; to them, he was an apostate from their order. The last disgrace they had experienced, was to be upheld by the very hand that had humbled them. The National Assembly was weary of his superiority. The Duke of Orleans felt that a single word from this man would drag to light, and crush, his premature projects of ambition. M. de La Fayette, the hero of the middling classes, would dread the orator of the people. Between the dictator of the city, and the dictator of the tribune, a secret jealousy must have existed.

Mirabeau, who had never attacked M. de La Fayette in his discourses, had often, in course of conversation, let fall words which leave their

impression of the man they are applied to. Mirabeau gone, La Fayette was so much the greater; and it was the same with all the orators of the Assembly. He had had none to rival, but there were many envious. His eloquence, popular though it had been, was patrician. His democracy came from above: he had none of that feeling of cupidity and hatred which excites the vile passions of the human heart, and sees in every benefit to the people an insult to the nobility. His popular sentiments were in some sort only a liberality of his genius. The magnificent effusions of his soul had no kindred with the paltry irritations of the demagogues. Conquering rights for the people, he had the air of granting them: he was a volunteer for democracy. By his attitudes, and by the part he took, he reminded the democrats, ranged behind him, only too keenly, that, from the Gracchi down to himself, the most powerful tribunes in the service of the people had sprung from the patrician ranks. His talents, unequalled in philosophic thought, extent of reflection, and grandeur of expression, were themselves a kind of aristocracy that could not be forgiven. Nature had made him the first; and death opened a place for all the second-rates. They could now dispute the place which none had been able to win. The tears shed over his coffin were feigned. The people alone regretted him sincerely, because the people are too powerful to be jealous, and because, far from reproaching Mirabeau for his

birth, they loved his nobility as a spirit torn from the aristocracy. Nay more; the nation uneasy, seeing her institutions falling one by one, and dreading a total upset, instinctively felt that a great man's genius was the last resource left them. This genius extinguished, they no longer saw aught, save gloom and pitfalls, in the footsteps of monarchy. The Jacobins alone rejoiced aloud, for this one man had been able to counterbalance them.

[Apropos to this, Dumont says of him, that he was the only man of whom it could have been believed, that, had he lived, the destinies of France might have taken a different course. His death inspired the factious with courage; Robespierre, Péthion, and a multitude of others, who were forgotten in his presence, instantly sprang forth great men. Of his own importance to the State, he was conscious, and before his decease, a gift of almost prophecy enabled him to pourtray, with perfect accuracy, the course which events would take, when he was no longer at hand to curb the passions of the mob. "You will have massacres, you will have butcheries, you will not even have the execrable honour of civil war; a vile faction will govern all, and will steep France in horrors."

In this brilliant sketch, we seek in vain for any of the distinctive traits which mark out the great men of the present day. Mirabeau was the arch demagogue of the great Revolution. In him we contemplate the fulfilment and perfection of the greatest vices of the nobility and democracy. We can nowhere now find anything to approximate to such an aggregation of vast ability and profound wicked-

ness. But he was wanted. Who could so well denounce the political iniquities of *lettres de cächet*, of a corrupt court, and an oppressive and unprincipled nobility, as one of themselves, at once the participator in, and the victim of the very crimes to be punished? When nations call for men of any stamp, they appear; and possibly France and mankind need no such monstrous genius as Mirabeau's now; hence, the absence of his parallel. He stood alone. And, if he were greater than his great prototype Gracchus, in the terrible results to which his intellect and energies were so auxiliary, he was far inferior to him in the purity of his personal character. Had he, the prime mover and controller of the storm he moved in, been a man of virtue and honour, very different, more stable, and more enduring, might have been the institutions he founded; and yet, had he been less wicked, he would have been less great, and the world would have lost the lesson so fearfully impressed on its memory.]

THE GIRONDINS.

[This only party in the great Revolution (for all others were but isolated individualities,) represented republican opinions, and numbered among their body the great names of Condorcet, Brissot, Vergniaud, Roland, and his illustrious wife. They, for a considerable time, held the ministry of France; and it was under their auspices that war was declared, and that France commenced her career of military glory, under the leadership of Dumouriez, the hero of Jemappes. Powerful enough to have saved France from the crime of regicide, they were led to vote in favour of the motion for the King's death, and thus betrayed their timidity to their assailants. Their want of principle and firmness led to their own downfall, dispersion, and ultimate execution. Vehemently opposed to monarchical institution on the one hand, they were equally hostile to the factions of the clubs, on the other. Their support lay rather in the provinces than in Paris; and the absolute dependance of any French government on Parisian opinion, whatever might be the feeling of the great body of the nation, is a singular phenomenon. Every metropolis would necessarily have power; from its concentration of numbers, intelligence and wealth, and its means for immediate action on a court or ministry. But in France, it has frequently been the remark of foreigners, somewhat satirical, it is true, that every little town is but Paris in miniature;—that after seeing Paris, wherever you go, you but see its reflex. This might reasonably hold good where the

feelings of the provinces and provincial towns are in accordance with those of the Parisian; but in the Revolution, the power of Carrière, Jourdan, Lebon, and a host of fearful miscreants, entirely emanated from the factions of Paris, while the great mass of the people abhorred and dreaded their excesses. The superior facility of organization and association in dense populations, may have something to do with it; but that would be a remark of general application. I am disposed to think that their proverbial vanity, or, as they themselves say, *amour propre*, and the almost religious sentiment Frenchmen are brought up in, that France is the first nation in Europe, and Paris the first city in the world, with respect to which, "whatever is, is right,"—may be a more probable explanation.

The Girondins are invested with a special interest, from the circumstances of their being the subject of Lamartine's history, and of their being the nearest type in the great Revolution, of the opinions now entertained and promulgated by the present Provisional Government of France. Their detestation of monarchy was a principle; the death of the King was a matter of mistaken policy, not mere cold-blooded cruelty or revenge; their sacrifice of themselves for the sake of their republican ideas, was worthy of the best days of Roman patriotism. The objectionable point in their ministry, was their war spirit, which led them into collision with Austria, and plunged the world into the calamities of war. In this, at least, their imitators happily dissent from them, for the professed tenour of their policy is peace; besides that, this is the government of the people and working classes—that of the *bourgeoisie*. Had the Girondins only kept Danton, who was for a short time their ally, they might have remained

in power, and established the basis of the new Republic more surely. Danton was the man of the mob, and had the element of popularity in his composition—the essential, deficient to the Girondins. But they provoked him, by ill-timed sarcasms, to a rupture, and they were lost. They also needed a man of action, which Danton was. They were rather theorists than practical, and Danton's perspicacity, quickness of thought, and promptitude in action, showed the able statesman, and was precisely what they wanted for a leader; while, on his part, his fame might have come down more pure and worthier of his abilities, had he been allowed to continue in coalition with them. They are thus drawn at the period of their first effective appearance, on the question of the decree against nonjuring priests—one of the great questions for the Assembly, and vitally affecting the Revolution; for the priests, naturally hostile to its progress, held in their hands the key to the people's feelings, and were likely, if left alone, to influence them to an extent detrimental to the new doctrines.]

A numerous party, in the Assembly, wished to push matters to their extremes, and to strain the situation of the King and Assembly (after their first reconciliation) till it snapped. This party needed agitation; for this calmness did not suit their designs. They had ambitions as lofty as their talents, eager as youth, and impatient as their thirst for place. The Constituent Assembly, composed of matured men, with a stake in the state, classified in the social hierarchy, had no ambition but

for ideas of liberty and glory; the new Assembly had, for noise, fortune, and power. Formed of obscure, poor, and unknown men, they aspired to conquer all they wanted.

This party, of which Brissot was the publisher, Péthion the popular member, and Vergniaud the genius, and whose body was the party of the Girondists, entered on the scene with the audacity and unanimity of conspiracy. It was the triumphant, envious, agitating, eloquent middle class, the aristocracy of talent, wishing to conquer, and use for its own advantage liberty, power, and the people. The Assembly was composed, in unequal proportions, of three elements;—the Constitutionalists, the party of aristocratic liberty and moderate monarchy; the Girondins, the party for a continuous movement, until the Revolution should fall into their hands; and the Jacobins, the party of the people, and of philosophy in action. The first, business and transition; the second, boldness and intrigue; the third, fanaticism and devotion. Of the two latter, the most hostile to the King was not the Jacobin. Aristocracy and the clergy destroyed, that party had no repugnance to the throne; it had, in a high degree, the instinct of unity of power; it was not the first to demand war, or to pronounce the word "republic;" but it first and frequently pronounced the word "dictatorship." The word "republic" belongs to Brissot and the Girondists. If the Girondists, on their coming into the Assembly, had joined

the constitutional party, to save the constitution by moderating it, and the Revolution by not urging war, they would have saved their party and controlled the throne. Honesty, deficient in their leader, was wanting in their conduct: intrigue drew them on. They became the agitators of an Assembly, where they might have been statesmen. They had no faith in the Republic; they feigned it. *In revolutions, sincere parts are the only skilful parts to play.* It is grand to die the victim of a faith; it is sad to die the dupe of one's ambition.

BRISSOT DE WARVILLE,

When yet obscure, wrote *"Le Patriote Françoise."* A politic man, and aspiring to a lofty station, he excited the Revolution so far only as he thought he could some day govern it. A Constitutionalist originally, the friend of Necker and Mirabeau, he had been a man of salary before he became a man of doctrines: he saw in the people a sovereign gaining his kingdom; the Republic was his rising sun, his fortune was at stake in it; but he watched the State with prudence, often looking behind, to see that opinion followed him.

Brissot was, as well as Danton and Condorcet, a candidate for the deputyship of Paris. As this man was the source of the Girondist party, the first apostle, and first martyr of the Republic, we must know him. Brissot was the son of a pastrycook, at Chartres, in which city he had received his education with Péthion, his fellow countryman. An adventurer in literature, he had begun by assuming the name of Warville, which concealed his own. Not to blush at a father's name, is the nobility of the plebeian. Brissot had it not; he began by furtively taking one of his titles from that aristocracy of races against which he was about to set up equality. Like Rousseau in everything but genius, he sought fortune in all conditions,

and descended even lower than he into misery and intrigue, before rising again to celebrity. Characters are sullied and stained by the struggle with the difficulties of life, in the dregs of great corrupted cities. Rousseau had borne his indigence and his dreams in the bosom of Nature, whose contemplation calms and purifies everything; and he quitted it a philosopher. Brissot had dragged his misery and vanity into the heart of Paris and of London, and into those haunts of infamy in which adventurers and pamphleteers drag on existence; he left them an intriguer.

Yet, amid all these vices, which had rendered his honesty doubtful, and his name suspected, he nurtured in the depths of his soul three virtues capable of restoring him—a constant affection for a young woman, whom he married in spite of her family; a taste for occupation; and a fortitude against the difficulties of life, which he had afterwards to display against death. His philosophy was Rousseau's; he believed in God; he had faith in liberty, truth, and virtue; he had in his soul that devotion, without reserve, for mankind, which is the charity of philosophers. He detested the society in which he found no footing; but what he hated in the social condition was, its prejudices, its falsehoods. He would have it remodelled, less for himself than for society itself. He consented to be crushed beneath its ruins, provided those ruins made room for the ideal plan of the government of

reason. Brissot was one of those mercenary talents who write for pay. He had written on all subjects, for every minister; especially for Turgot. Criminal laws, political economy, diplomacy, literature, philosophy, even libels; his pen was let out for any purpose. Seeking the support of all celebrated or influential men, he had offered incense to all, from Voltaire and Franklin to Marat. Known to Madame de Genlis, he was indebted to her for some acquaintance with the Duc d'Orleans. Sent to London by the Minister, on one of those missions which are nameless, he became connected there with the Editor of the "*Courrier de l'Europe,*" a French journal, printed in England, the boldness of which annoyed the court of the Tuileries. He hired himself out to Swinton, the proprietor of this paper, and edited it in a manner favourable to the views of Vergennes. At Swinton's he made acquaintance with several libellers; amongst others, Morande. These writers, outcasts of society, frequently became the scoundrels of the pen, living at once on the scandals of vice, and on the pay of spies. Their contact spoiled Brissot; he was, or appeared, their accomplice. Disgraceful blots rested on his life, and were cruelly revived by his enemies, when he was compelled to appeal to public esteem.

Returning to France at the first symptoms of the Revolution, he had watched its successive phases, with the ambition of an impatient man, and with the indecision of one

depending on the stream. He was frequently wrong, and had compromised himself by his too ready devotion towards certain men who had seemed to him for a moment to centralize the power, especially La Fayette. As editor of the "*Patriote Française*," he occasionally ventured revolutionary ideas, flattering the future by going faster even than the factions themselves. He deserved to be disowned by Robespierre. "Whilst I content myself," said Robespierre, referring to him, "with defending the principles of liberty, without opening any irrelevant question, what are you doing, Brissot? and you, Condorcet? Known until, now, by your great *moderation*, and your connection with La Fayette;—for a long time follower of the Aristocratic club of 1789, you suddenly peal out a Republic. You issue a journal entitled '*The Republican!*' Then minds begin to ferment. The mere word Republic sows division amongst the patriots, and gives our enemies the pretext they were seeking for by announcing that there exists in France a party which conspires against monarchy and the constitution. By this title we are persecuted; peaceable citizens are sacrificed on the altar of their country! By this name we are transformed into factions, and the Revolution recedes, perhaps, half a century. It was at the same time that Brissot was coming to the Jacobins, where he had never appeared, to propose a Republic, of which the simplest rules of prudence had forbidden us to speak in the

National Assembly. By what fatality does Brissot find himself there? I would fain not see craft in his conduct; I would only see imprudence and folly. But now that his connection with La Fayette and Narbonne are no longer a mystery—now that he no longer dissimulates his plans of dangerous innovation, let him understand that the nation will in a moment rend apart all the plots concocted during so many years by petty intriguers."

So spake Robespierre! jealous by anticipation, and yet just, on Brissot's nomination. The Revolution rejected him, the counter-Revolution did not dishonour him less. Brissot's old allies in London, Morande in particular, returned to Paris with the impunity of the troublous times, revealed to the Parisians, in the Argus, and by placards, the secret intrigues and the scandals of the literary career of their former associate. They quoted authentic letters, in which Brissot had lied unblushingly, as to his name, the condition of his family, and his father's fortune, in order to acquire Swinton's confidence, to gain credit, and to make dupes in England. The proofs were overwhelming. A considerable sum had been extorted from a man named Desforges, under pretence of founding a Lyceum in London; and this sum had been expended by Brissot on himself. This was a trifle. Brissot, on quitting England, had deposited in the hands of this Desforges eighty letters, which too plainly established his participation in the

infamous traffic of libels carried on by his friends. It was proved that Brissot had connived at the dispatch to France, and the propagation of odious pamphlets by Morande. The journals hostile to his election seized on these scandals, and held them up to public opinion. He was accused, moreover, of having extracted from the funds of the district of the Filles-Saint-Thomas, of which he was president, a long-forgotten sum for his own purse. His defence was laboured and obscure; it was enough, however, for the club of the Rue-de-la-Michodière to declare his innocence and integrity.

Some journals, solely occupied with the political view of his life, took up his defence, and confined themselves to complaints against calumny. Manuel, his friend, who edited a cynical paper, wrote to console him:—"These ordures of calumny, spread abroad at the moment of the scrutiny, always end by leaving a dirty stain on those upon whom they are spilt. But it is allowing a triumph to the enemies of the people, to repulse thus a man who fearlessly attacks them. They give me votes in spite of my ravings, and my love of the bottle..... Leave Père Duchesne alone, and nominate Brissot; he is a better man than I."

Marat, in his "*Ami du Peuple*," spoke ambiguously of Brissot. "Brissot," says the friend of the people, "was never, in my eyes, a thorough patriot. Whether from ambition or baseness, he has hitherto betrayed the duties

of a good citizen. Why is he so tardy to abandon this system of hypocrite-general? Poor Brissot! Thou art the victim of a court valet—of a base hypocrite's perfidy! Why lend thy paw to La Fayette? Why, thou must experience the fate of all men of indecision. Thou hast displeased everybody; thou canst never get on. If any sense of dignity is left, hasten to blot out thy name from the list of candidates for the next election."

Thus appeared on the scene, for the first time, in the midst of the hootings of both parties, this man, who attempted in vain to escape from the contempt heaped on his name, by the faults of his youth, in order to enter on the austerity of his political part—a mixed yarn, half intrigue, half virtue. Brissot, destined to serve as the rallying point of the Girondin party, showed beforehand, in his character, what, in after time, was the destiny of his party,—intrigue and patriotism, faction and martyrdom.

[We should, however, do the man injustice, if we allow this impression of him in his early career to be our opinion of his subsequent conduct; in which, after casting away the vices and follies of youth, he showed himself a man of ability, of steady principles, and a friend of freedom. Many great men of revolutions, even those whose fame is most respectable, have sullied their youth with excesses, the fault of their position, or the impatient outbreak of an active and turbulent disposition. I am

far, very far, from thinking that it is expedient or advisable for youth to pass through a certain amount of dissipation, to fit them for the world—for it ever leaves its taint. But in Revolutions we do not look for the great men in mediocre talents or passive natures—and in some, the disorders of youth are the indications of energetic character.]

VERGNIAUD.

[It was after the terrible visit of the mob to the Tuileries, where they subjected the King and his unhappy Queen to hours of the grossest insult and apprehension for their lives, in consequence of which LaFayette quitted the frontier army, and, hurrying to Paris, demanded justice on the traitors,—that Vergniaud appeared in all the splendour of his eloquence; and, upon the proposition of the Jacobins to punish La Fayette for his breach of discipline, openly denounced the King as the author of all their calamities. The moment was dangerous—La Fayette and the army sympathizing with royalty in its unparalleled exposure to indignity on the one hand; on the other the Assembly and the Parisians almost in insurrection, at this unlooked-for interference on behalf of the Monarch.]

"Death to the Assembly, to the Revolution, to liberty, if the guillotine of Orleans do not justice on La Fayette!" was the unanimous yell of the Jacobins.

The Assembly responded to these cries for death, by convulsive emotions. At last, one of those great voices which concentrate the cry of a whole people, and give to public passion the brilliance and resonance of genius—Vergniaud—in that sitting of the 3rd July, took up the word, and soaring, for the first time, to the summit of his eloquence, demanded, like

Siéyes, his inspirer and friend, that the danger of the country should be proclaimed.

Vergniaud, born at Limoges, and an advocate at Bordeaux, was thirty-three years of age. The movement had taken him up quite young, and borne him along with it. His calm, majestic features announced the sense of his power; no tension contracted them. Facility, that grace of genius, rendered his talents, character, and attitude, all pliant. A certain *nonchalance* announced that he easily forgot himself; sure to recover himself at the moment when he should require to collect himself. His brow was serene, his look composed, his mouth serious and somewhat sad; the severe thoughts of antiquity were graven in his physiognomy with the smiles and the carelessness of youth. At the foot of the tribune he was familiarly loved; when he ascended it, all were surprised into admiring and respecting him. His first word, his first glance, placed an immense distance between the man and the orator. He was an instrument of enthusiasm, and assumed his value and position only under inspiration. This inspiration, assisted by a deep voice, and inexhaustible elocution, had been cultivated by the purest remains of ancient oratory; his sentences had the images and harmony of the finest verse; and if he had not been the orator of a democracy, he would have been its philosopher and poet. His all popular genius forbade him to descend to the language of the

people, even to flatter them. He had passions noble as his language, and adored the Revolution as a sublime philosophy, which was to ennoble the whole nation without other victims than prejudices and tyrannies. He had doctrines, but no enmities; the thirst of glory, but no ambition. Power itself seemed too material, too vulgar, for him to aim at; he disdained it for himself, and sought it for his ideas alone. Glory and posterity were the two sole aims of his thoughts; he only mounted the tribune to behold them from a loftier stand, and later he saw but them from the scaffold, when he plunged into the future,—young, handsome, immortal in the memory of France,—with all his enthusiasm, and some few stains, already washed away with his generous blood. Such was the man whom nature had given to the Girondins as a chief. He disdained to be one, although he had the soul and the views of a statesman; too careless to be the leader of a party, too great to be second to any one—he was Vergniaud—more glorious than useful to his friends: he would not lead them; he immortalised them.

Till then Vergniaud had only dissertated; that day, he was the voice of the country, and ceased not to be so until the day his voice was smothered in his blood. He was a man who needs not to grow slowly in an assembly. Such as he appear great, they appear alone, that day when events assign them their character. Vergniaud had been but a few months

in Paris. Obscure, unknown, modest, without prescience of himself, he had been living with three of his colleagues from the south, in a poor chamber in the Rue des Jeûneurs, then in a distant mansion of the faubourg that surrounded the Tivoli gardens. The letters he wrote to his family are full of the humblest details of this domestic *ménage*. He has a difficulty to live, and watches with strict economy his smallest expenses. Some louis, begged by him from his sister, appear a sum sufficient to maintain him a long time. He writes to them to send him a little linen by the cheapest conveyance. He dreams not of fortune, nor even of glory. He comes to the post where duty sends him. He is frightened, in his patriotic simplicity, at the mission Bordeaux imposes on him. An ancient probity shines in the confidential outpourings of his correspondence with home. His family has interests to be pressed with the ministers. He refuses to solicit for them, for fear that the demand for justice may, in his mouth, appear to command a favour. "I am chained in this matter by delicacy, I have made this decree for myself," he says to his brother-in-law, M. Alluaud de Limoges, a second father to him.

All these intimate communications between Vergniaud, his sister and brother-in-law, breathe simplicity, tenderness of heart, home. The roots of the public man, tap into the pure soil of private manners. No trace of factious spirit, of republican fanaticism, of hatred against

the King, reveals itself in the intimacy of Vergniaud's sentiments. He speaks of the Queen with tenderness, of Louis XVI. with pity. "The equivocal conduct of the King," he writes, "accumulates our danger and his own. I am afraid that he is coming to the Assembly to day. If he does not pronounce himself in a decided manner, he is preparing some great catastrophe. He has plenty to do, to bury in oblivion so many false steps, which are regarded as treasons."*—And, further on, falling again into his own domestic situation, "I have no money; my old Paris creditors are calling on me. I pay them a little every month: rents are high: it is impossible to pay all." This young man, whose conduct crushed a throne, had scarcely where to lay his head, in the empire he was about to throw down.

Brought up at the Jesuits' college, by the benevolence of Turgot, then intendant of the Limousin, Vergniaud, his studies ended, had entered a seminary. He was going to devote himself to the priesthood: he recoiled at the first step, and rejoined his family. Solitary and sad, his imagination, at first, was vented in poetry before bursting out in eloquence. He was sporting with his genius without knowing it. Sometimes he would shut himself up in his chamber, feign to himself a people for auditors, and would improvise discourses on imaginary catastrophes. One day, his brother-in-law, M. Alluaud, heard him through the

* How like our own Charles I.!

door. He had a presentiment of the glory of his family, and sent him to Bourdeaux to study the practice of law.

The student was recommended to the president Dupaty, a celebrated writer and eloquent Parliamentarian. Dupaty conceived a vague hope of greatness for this young man. He loved him, protected him, took him by the hand, and admitted him to work near him. There is kindred in genius as in blood. The illustrious man became the intellectual father of the orphan. The solicitude of Dupaty for Vergniaud recalled the old patronage of Hortensius and Cicero. "I have paid with my own money, and will continue to pay for some years, for your brother-in-law's board," writes Dupaty to Alluaud; "I will get him some select causes for his commencement: he only wants time,—one day he will do great glory to his name. Help him to provide for his most urgent wants. He has no gown: I am writing to his uncle, to touch his generosity, and hope we shall get one from him. Depend on me for the rest; and trust to the interest his misfortunes and talents inspire me with."

Vergniaud promptly justified these presages of illustrious friendship. At Dupaty's, he studied the austere virtues of antiquity, as well as the majestic forms of the Roman forum. The citizen was perceptible in the advocate; the man of worth gave conscience and authority to his words. Scarcely rich from his early fees at the bar, he divests himself of, and

sells, the little property he inherited from his mother, to pay the debts of his deceased father. He redeems the honour of his memory with all he possesses; and arrives at Paris almost indigent. Boyer Fonfrède and Ducos de Bordeaux, his two friends, receive him as a guest at their table, and under their roof. Vergniaud, thoughtless of the means of success, as all men who feel great power within, worked little, and trusted to opportunity and nature. His genius, unhappily indolent, loved to slumber, and abandon itself to the *nonchalance* of his age and mind. It was necessary to shake him, to arouse him from his youthful idleness, and to drive him to the tribune or the council. With him, as with the Orientals, there was no transition between listlessness and heroism. Action carried him away, but soon left him,—he relapsed into the reverie of talent.

Brissot, Guadet, Gensonné, took him to Madame Roland's. She did not find him manly and ambitious enough for her genius. His southern manners, his literary tastes, his attraction to a less imperious beauty, led him continually into the society of an actress at the *Théatre Français*, Mad. Simon Candeille. He had written for her, under an assumed name, some scenes of the then celebrated drama, "*La Belle Fermière.*" This young woman—at once poetess, authoress, comedian, —displayed in this drama all the fascination of her mind, her talent, her beauty. Vergniaud was infatuated in this life of art, music, declama-

tion, and pleasure: he seized on the enjoyment of youth, as if struck by the idea that it would soon be gathered from him. His habits were meditative and lazy. He rose at mid-day; wrote a little, and on loose leaves,—he placed the paper on his knees, like a man in a hurry, who denies himself time; he composed his speeches in his reveries, and retained them in his memory with the aid of notes; he polished his eloquence at leisure, as the soldier polishes his weapons when at peace. He would not only that his blows should be mortal, but that they should be brilliant—as curious in art as in policy. The blow struck, he abandoned its counter-stroke to destiny, and abandoned himself anew to indolence. He was not the man of all moments; he was the man of grand days.

Vergniaud was of middling height; his robust and square form had the firmness of an orator's statue: you recognised the wordy warrior. His nose was short, wide, proudly drawn up at the nostril; his rather thick lips defined his mouth firmly; you could see they were modelled to spout forth the words in great waves, like the lips of a triton at the issue of a great spring. His black eyes, full of fire, seemed to dance under the projecting eyebrow. His large flat forehead had the polish of a mirror which reflects intelligence; and his chesnut hair, like Mirabeau's, undulated with the movements of his head. The marks of small-pox scarred his face, like marble picked

by the mason's hammer. His pale complexion had the lividness of profound emotion. In repose and in a crowd, no one would have noticed the man; he would have passed with the vulgar without conceding or arresting a look. But when the soul was shed on his physiognomy, like the light on a bust, his entire figure borrowed from the expression an ideal splendour and beauty that no one of his features had in detail. It was illumined with eloquence. The palpitating muscles of his eyelids, his temples, his lips, were modelled to his thoughts, and identified his visage with the very idèa; it was the transfiguration of genius. Vergniaud's daylight was speech; the pedestal of his beauty, the tribune. When he was descended from it, all passed away; the orator was only a man."

[The dreaded revelations of the iron chest, before alluded to in the sketch of Mirabeau, impelled the organs of the popular party, with a view of cutting away the ground from the Girondins, in their anticipated disclosures of the accomplices in the King's schemes for restoration to power or escape, to accuse the unhappy Louis himself as the author of all their calamities, and to demand his trial, and, (foregone conclusion) his execution. Robespierre, Marat, and the other opposition members, warmly supported the proposal. Vergniaud opposed it, with all his strength; and, for the moment, the cause of humanity triumphed. On the renewal of the discussions on this engrossing subject, seconded by the pressure from without, the Jacobins, and

their accomplices, succeeded in carrying the King's death. Vergniaud, the president of the chamber, the head of the Girondins, the philosopher, having succumbed to his position, to the horror of the few, and the astonishment even of his opponents, voted for the King's death, a vote followed by that of his party, which, as Lamartine shews, turned the scale. The conjoint inhumanity and impolicy of this act, however, soon displayed themselves; and to this departure from his avowed principles, and admission of his weak position, in the obligation to propitiate the support of his formidable antagonists, the fall of the Girondins may be ascribed. Their precipitation had lost them the support of Danton long before, whose alliance might have been secured. The death of Louis, the consequent accession of strength to the party of Marat, Robespierre, and Danton, who, hating and dreading each other, yet coalesced to oust the ministers, was soon followed by the impeachment of the party, the imprisonment of twenty-two, among them Brissot and Vergniaud, and the proscription and flight of others, including Péthion. During their imprisonment, the Queen, after undergoing every indignity, and every misfortune, had been tried and executed. The Girondins are about to reap, as they have sown. The following is a condensed account of the catastrophe.]

From the 2nd of June to the date of their fall, and of the captivity of their principal orators, the Girondins were the constant objects of resentment to the Parisians, whose thirst for vengeance was more aggravated than allayed. The Committee of General Safety charged Amar, one of its most implacable

members, to deliver up to the tribunal the twenty-two heads of this party, and to decree suspected the sixty-three deputies charged with moral complicity with the Gironde, and who had protested, on the 6th and 19th of June, in a courageous and public act, against the people's violence, and against the mutilation of the national representation. A profound mystery surrounded this measure of the Committee of General Safety. It acted like the Council of Ten, reassuring, by dissimulation and silence, the victims it feared to let slip.

* * * * *

Vergniaud, and some others, had voluntarily remained prisoners in Paris. Brissot, whom public opinion considered the chief of that faction, because he had been their publisher, and had given it the name, had anticipated his arrest by flight. On his arrival at Chartres, his native place, he found no friends. He quitted the town alone, on foot, clad in borrowed garments, and sought to gain, across the fields and cross roads, the frontiers of Switzerland and the departments of the south. Furnished with a false passport, Brissot wandered about in this way, without being recognised, eating and sleeping in cabins, and resuming his route by day, in the heart of the country, covered, at this period, with its most striking vegetation. He recovered, in the sight of the splendid sky, the fields in flower, and the solitary forests on the banks of the Loire, that

passion for Nature, that attachment for solitude, which political tempests had never changed in his soul, and which destiny seemed to make him enjoy more deliciously, at the moment she was about to sever him from it for ever. Detected and arrested at Moulins, and scarcely escaping the fury of the Jacobins there, he had been brought back to Paris, through a thousand imprecations and deaths, and thrown into the dungeons of the Abbaye, where he languished five months.

The captivity of the other Girondins had followed the oscillation of public opinion. Now mild, and, so to say, nominal, their families had been admitted; they were served by their domestics, provided with gold and false passports, as if to tempt their flight. The Mountain was more embarassed by, than jealous of their victims. The course of events, the reverses in the north, and the death of the Queen, had increased the rigour of their captivity; and, transferred from one prison to another, they had all met, and were now united in the same captivity with the servants of royalty, the friends of La Fayette and Dumouriez, Barnave, Bailly, Malesherbes. The neutrality of the dungeon brought about similarities of situation, and the same adversity reduced them to a level.

[The Girondins, still inflexible in their republicanism, preserved their revolutionary attitude, neither affecting repentance of their opinions, nor

humiliation at their fall. They identify themselves with the Convention, in all its acts of patriotic energy and anti-royalist severity; separating from it, for what they designated its crimes and subjection. Something of their character of representatives, their celebrity, and power, yet attached to them; and, captive, they reigned in the memory or admiration of those around them.

Among the various patriotic, philosophic, and religious inscriptions written on the walls of their prison (the Carmes) and still extant and discovered untouched upon the door of their prison, very recently opened, after being closed for years, the following, in large letters of blood and in Vergniaud's hand-writing, may be seen.—

'Potius mori quam fœdari!
Better die than commit crime.'

They were transferred the night preceding their trials to the Conciergerie, where, freak of fortune! the same roof covered the victims of royalty and of the Republic. The Queen! she had not yet suffered her doom!—They there met Brissot. The restrictions upon them were somewhat lessened, and they had the use of books, pens, and paper; and saw their friends in the wicket. Brissot saw his wife occasionally, who came, lifting their son in her arms to kiss his father.]

Vergniaud's brother, M. Alluaud, arrived from Limoges, to bring the prisoner a little money; for Vergniaud was in complete destitution—his clothes were falling into mere rags. M. Alluaud brought with him his son, a child of ten, whose features recalled to the prisoner

the image of his beloved sister. The child, seeing his uncle thus confined like a felon, his face wan and thin, his hair scanty, beard long, and clothes dirty, worn out, and falling off him,—began to cry, and clung with fright to his father's knees. "My child!" said the captive, taking him in his arms, "hold up, my child; look at me well. When you are a man, you will say you saw Vergniaud, the founder of the Republic, at the finest period, and in the most glorious costume of his life—that in which he was suffering the persecution of villains, and when he was preparing to die for free men."——The child did recollect, and told it to M. de Lamartine, fifty years afterwards.

The dispositions of the prisoners were various, but Vergniaud affected neither the gaity of some nor the impatient ardour to die of another, nor even the laborious industry of Brissot to justify himself one day before posterity; for Brissot, dreading the influence of his enemies' attacks on his fame, for fear that his recent career should be confounded with his early disgrace, was engaged in compiling a posthumous account of his actions and motives. He was indifferent—not the indifference of the light-minded man who does not rise to the dignity of his fate, and who profanes the three most sacred things in life—conscience, misfortune, and death; but that indifference of the grave man who judges of his own situation, who is master of it, and gives distinctions to his life, even to the moment when he sacrifices it to duty.]

He appeared the most impassible of his companions in adversity, only because he was the most reflecting and greatest. Friendship had a sovereign ascendant over his soul. The eve of the trial he threw away the poison he had carried about him for five months, that he might die the same death as his friends, and that he might give them his company to the scaffold.

Trial was condemnation: one of them, Valazé, on hearing his sentence, instantly stabbed himself. The tribunal ordered that his corpse should be taken back to his prison, and thence conveyed in the same cart with his accomplices to the place of death, and buried with them.

Four gendarmes, the executors of this judgment, bore the bleeding corpse on a bier, and placed it in an angle of their dungeon. The Girondins came, one by one, to kiss the heroic hand of their friend. They covered his face with his cloak. So soon to meet again, the meeting was more respectful than sad. "'Till to-morrow," said they to the corpse, and rallied all their strength for the morrow.

It was midnight: the deputy Bailleul, their colleague in the Assembly, their accomplice in opinion, like them, proscribed, but escaping the proscription, and concealed in Paris, had promised to send a repast from without, on the day of their trial; a last meal, triumphant or funereal, according to the sentence, in rejoicing for their liberty, or in commemoration of their death. Bailleul, although invisible,

had kept his promise through the agency of a friend. The funeral supper was laid in the great cell. *Recherché* viands, rare wines, costly flowers, and numerous wax lights, covered the oak-table of the prison. Luxury of the last adieu, prodigality of the dying, who have nothing to spare for the following day! The condemned took their seats at the last banquet, at first to recruit in silence their exhausted strength; afterwards, to await the day in patience and mental occupation. It was not the pain of sleep. A priest, then young, destined to survive them more than a half-century, Abbé Lambert, friend of Brissot and the other Girondins, introduced into the Conciergerie to console or to speed the dying with a parting benediction, waited the end of their supper in the corridor. The doors were open. He thus assisted at the scene, and set down in his memory the conduct, the sighs, and the words of the company. It is from him that posterity receives the chief part of these details, truthful as conscience, and faithful as the recollection of a last friend.

The repast was prolonged till the first dawn of day. Vergniaud, placed in the middle of the table, presided with the same calm dignity he had maintained on the night of the 10th of August, when presiding over the Convention. Vergniaud was, of all, the one who had least to regret in quitting life, for he had accomplished his glory, and left neither father, mother, wife, nor children behind him. The others were

placed in groups, drawn together either by chance or affection. Brissot, alone, was at the bottom of the table, eating little, and not speaking.

For a long time, nothing indicated, either in their countenance or demeanour, that this meal was the prelude to execution. One would rather have called it a chance meeting of travellers in an inn, on their journey, hurrying to seize the fugitive pleasures of a meal that the departure must interrupt. They ate and drank with appetite, but soberly. From the door, the noise of the service, and the clinking of glasses, with a few remarks interspersed, was audible: the silence of comrades satisfying their first hunger. When the meats were taken away, and the fruits, bottles, and flowers left, conversation became by turns animated, noisy, or grave, like the remorse of careless men whose tongues and thoughts are loosened by generous wine. Mainvielle, Antiboul, Duchâtel, Fonfrède, Ducos, all the youths, who could scarce believe themselves old enough to die on the morrow, broke loose in light words and joyous sallies. These words, contrasted with death, so near at hand, profaned the sanctity of the last hour, and iced over the false smile that these young people endeavoured to spread around them. This affectation of gaiety before God and their last hour, was equally disrespectful to life or immortality. They could neither quit the one nor attempt the other so heedlessly. These posthumous pleasantries fell

from their lips as fall from the coffin those flowers no one smells,—which contract the odour of the tomb, and which, when they are not relics, resemble mockeries.

Brissot, Fauchet, Sillery, Lassource, Lehardy, Carra, tried sometimes to respond to these boisterous challenges with a feigned gaiety and false indifference. But this misplaced gaiety of their young colleagues scarcely moved the lips of these ripe men. Vergniaud, more grave, and more really intrepid in his gravity, regarded Ducos and Fonfrède with a smile in which indulgence was mingled with compassion.

These bursts of funeral noise and joy abated towards morning, however, and the conversation took a more serious turn. Brissot spoke in prophetic terms of the coming woes of the Republic, decapitated of her most virtuous and most eloquent citizens. "What blood will flow to expiate ours," he cried, in concluding. They were silent, as if in alarm at the phantom conjured up by Brissot.

"'My friends,' replied Vergniaud, 'in grafting the tree we have killed it; it was too old. Robespierre cuts it down. Will he be more fortunate than we? No. The soil is too light to nourish the roots of civic liberty—the people too infantile to handle the laws without wounding themselves: they will return to their kings; but revolutions are like those crises which bleach a man's head in a night. The people ripens rapidly in them. The blood

from our veins is warm enough to fertilize the soil of the Republic. Let us not be carried away by the future, but leave hope to the people, in exchange for the death they give us.'"

There was a long silence after the words of Vergniaud, and the discussion soared from earth to heaven, with their thoughts. "What shall we be doing at this time to morrow," asked Ducos, who always mingled the forms of jesting with the most serious subjects. Each responded according to his nature. "We shall be asleep after the day," said some. The scepticism of the age had corrupted even the last thoughts, and promised nothing better than the annihilation of the soul to men who were going to die for the immortality of a human thought. The immortality of the soul, and the sublime conjectures of that future life whose confines they touched, occupied the moments left to conversation, more suitably. Voices sank: the accents were more solemn: smiles passed away: the tones of the words became grave and steady, like the noise of a hammer sounding a tomb. Fonfrède, Gensonné, Carra, Fauchet, Brissot, held discourse pregnant with all the divinity of human reason, and all the certainty of conscience, on the mysterious problems of the immaterial destiny of the human mind.

Vergniaud, who had been silent till then, called on by his friends, took up the subject. "Never," said the witness we are quoting, and

who had often admired him in the tribune,—* "Never had his countenance, his action, his words, or the deep accents of his voice, so touched the chords of his auditors' hearts. He seemed to speak from the tribune of God."

The words of Vergniaud were lost. Their effect only was impressed on the mind of the priest.

After binding up, in one single and irrefragable mass, all the moral proofs of the existence of a Supreme Being, which, with his epoch, he called a Supreme Being;—after demonstrating the necessity of a Providence, consequence of the excellence of that Supreme Being, in the creatures emanating from Him, and the necessity of justice, divine debt of the Creator to his creatures;—after citing from Socrates to Cicero, and from Cicero to all the just men immolated, the universal belief of the people and of the sages, a proof above all proofs, since it is in nature an instinct of second life, as irrefutable as the instinct of present life;—after pushing to evidence and to enthusiasm, the certainty of a continuation of being after this mortal being, not destroyed but metamorphosed by death,—he exclaimed in more eloquent terms, and, exalting himself almost to the lyrics of the political prophet in bringing the subject to the situation of his co-accused, to draw his last proof from themselves.—"But the best demonstration of

* Some of our readers are probably not aware that the French parliamentary speakers, on addressing the Chamber, ascend a rostrum or pulpit, called the tribune.

immortality, is it not we? We here? We, calm, serene, impassible, by the side of our friend's corpse, in view of our own corpses, discussing, like a peaceful assembly of philosophers, the light or darkness which will immediately succeed our last sigh, dying happier than Danton who will live, or Robespierre who will triumph?

"Why this calm in my own discourse; this serenity in our souls? Is it not in us the sentiment of having discharged a great duty towards mankind? Well, then, what is country, what mankind? Is it that mass of animated clay, which is man to day, which will be blood and dirt to-morrow? No, it is not for this living filth, it is for the soul of mankind, and of the country, we die! But who are we, then, ourselves, if not a parcel of that collective soul of the human race? Every man of whom our species is composed has an immortal soul, imperishable, and confounded with that soul of his country, and of the human race, for which it is so great and so pleasant to devote oneself to suffer and to die! Behold, wherefore we are not sublime dupes, but beings conforming to their moral instinct, and who are going, after this duty fulfilled, to live again, to suffer or enjoy in immortality the destinies of man. Let us die, then, not with confidence, but with certainty. Our witness, in this grand suit with death, is our conscience—our judge, that Great Being, whose name ages search, and whose designs we serve as tools. He breaks in his work, whereof the remnants fall at his feet.

Death is only the most powerful act of life; for it heralds in a superior life. Were it not so," he added thoughtfully,—"were it not so, there would be something greater than God. It would be the just man, like ourselves, immolating himself, without future or reward, for his country! This supposition is an absurdity or a blasphemy. I reject it with contempt, or with horror. No! Vergniaud is not greater than God; but God is more just than Vergniaud, and will elevate him to-morrow to a scaffold, to justify and avenge him in the future."

Such were nearly his words, the sense of which only could be hastily noted down. "Well said!" exclaimed Lassource; "but I have, in my breast, a more certain proof than the eloquence of expiring genius: the Word of God, dead for men." "Down!" said one of the young men, with an ironical smile; "Lassource, no dreams before sleep. Let us keep our common sense till to-morrow. Reason thinks, religions dream. I only believe in reason." "And I," said Sillery, "believe in both. Christ dying on a scaffold, like us, is only a divine testimony to human reason. No; his religion, that we have too much confounded with tyranny, is not oppression, 'tis deliverance. Christ was the Girondin of immortality."

Fauchet* made a pathetic speech on the

* Once a priest, Bisho of Calvados.

Passion, comparing their sufferings to that of the Calvary. They were all moved, and many wept.

Vergniaud reconciled all, at last, in some phrases taken down, as they fell from his lips. "Believe as we will," he said, "let us die certain of our life, and of the price of our death! Let us each give up, as a sacrifice, what we have, one—his doubts, another—his faith, all—our blood, for liberty! When man has given himself up as a victim to God, what can he more?"

At ten o'clock, the executioners entered to prepared the heads of the condemned for the knife, and to tie their hands. All came forward of themselves, to submit their heads to the scissors, and to extend their arms to the cords. Gensonné, picking up a curl of his black hair, held it out to the Abbé Lambert, begging the priest to forward it to his wife, whose retreat he indicated. "Tell her that is all I can send her of my remains, but that I die addressing all my thoughts to her." Vergniaud drew out his watch, wrote some initials, and the date, 30th of October, with a pin in the inside of the gold case; and slipped it into the hand of one of the assistants, to be be given to a young girl whom he loved as a brother, and whom, as it was said, he had intended to marry. All had a name, an affection, a love, a regret, that they let escape, during these preparations: almost all, some relics of themselves to send to those they were leaving

on earth. The hope of a memory below is the last tie the dying retain in quitting life. These mysterious legacies were acquitted.

When all their hair had fallen on the floor of the cell, the executioners and gendarmes collected the condemned, and made them march in a column towards the court of the Palais. Five carts were waiting. An immense crowd surrounded them. On their first step out of the Conciergerie, the Girondins raised, with one voice, like a dead march, the first verse of the Marseillaise, dwelling, with a significant energy, on those double-meaning lines:—

"Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé."

From that moment they ceased to think of themselves, to think only of the example of a republican's death they meant to leave behind them. Their voices only rested at the end of each verse, to arise with redoubled energy, at the commencement of the next. Their march, and their agony, was a chaunt. They were four in each cart, and in one five. The corpse of Valazé was laid on the last seat. His uncovered head, shaken by the shocks of the roadway, jumped about under the eyes, and on the knees of his friends, who were obliged to close their eyes, not to see his livid visage. But they sang, like the rest. Arrived at the foot of the scaffold, they all embraced, in sign of community in liberty, in life, and in death. Then they took up the funeral strain again, to

encourage each other mutually, to the death, and to send to each one dying till his final moment the voices of his companions. All died without weakness, Sillery with irony: ascending the platform he made the tour of it, saluting the people right and left, as though to thank them for the glory of the scaffold. The chaunt lowered by a voice, at each stroke of the axe. One sole voice continued the Marseillaise: it was Vergniaud's, executed the last. These words were his last; like his companions, he did not die: he swooned away in enthusiasm, and his life, begun by immortal orations, ended by a hymn to the eternity of the Revolution.

The same tumbril carried away the bodies, the same grave covered them by the side of Louis XVI!

[I cannot help thinking that, in the character of Vergniaud, Lamartine has been led away into a strain of enthusiastic eulogy, by his admiration and sympathy for the ideas he entertained and promulgated, rather than by indifferent appreciation of his worth and influence. Other critics by no means concur in this unqualified praise of Vergniaud and belief of his supereminent powers; and indeed the history of the Girondins and their whole career, as drawn by Lamartine, is rather, in my estimation, to be taken as a tribute of his esteem for their republican views and opinions, amid the cries for dictatorship, monarchy or anarchy, on all sides, than as emanating from the real importance or dignity either of the party or its individual members.]

CONDORCET.

An aristocrat by birth, but an aristocrat of genius, Condorcet had, like Mirabeau, crossed into the camp of the people, and become a democrat by philosophy. His passion was the transformation of human reason: he wrote the "*Chronique de Paris.*" He was a philosopher, as intrepid in his actions as daring in his speculations. His policy was corollary to his philosophy. He believed in the divinity of reason, and in the ompipotence of human intelligence served by liberty. Heaven, the seat of all ideal perfection, to which man defers his most pleasing dreams, was placed by Condorcet on this earth. Science was his virtue, human intellect his god. The mind, impregnated by science and multiplied by time, according to him, must triumph over all the resistance of matter, discover all the creative powers of nature, and renew the face of creation. From this system he had compiled a political scheme, whose first dogma was to adore the future and detest the past. He possessed the cool fanaticism of logic, and the reflective ardour of conviction. Pupil of Voltaire, of Alembert, and Helvetius, he was, like Bailly, of that intermediate generation through whom philosophy had made her way into the

Revolution. More ambitious than Bailly, he had none of his inflexible calmness. Hated by the court, he returned their hate with all the virulence of a renegade. He had become one of the people, to convert the people into the army of philosophy. He only desired a republic insomuch as it was requisite to overturn prejudices. Ideas once victorious, he would willingly have confided the government to constitutional monarchy. He was more a man of rule than of anarchy. Aristocrats ever carry with them in the popular party, ideas of order and of command. They wish to regulate disorder, and even to direct the hurricane. Your true anarchists are they who are impatient of having always been under obedience, and yet know themselves incapable of command. From 1789 Condorcet edited the "*Chronique de Paris,*" a journal of constitutional doctrines, but in which might be detected the pulsation of anger in the cold and polished hand of philosophy. Had Condorcet been only endowed with warmth and colour of language, he might have been the Mirabeau of another assembly. He had his faith and constancy, he had not the sonorous accents, which make your soul echo in the soul of another. The club of the electors of Paris, which held its meeting at Sainte Chapelle, returned Condorcet to the deputation: the same club sent Danton.

* * * * *

The day after the 31st May, Condorcet is waiting at his house the gendarmes, whose duty

it is to guard him. The Montagnards hesitated for a moment before so great a name. They fear to dishonour the Revolution in proscribing philosophy. The Jacobins reproach the Montagnards with their weakness. The greater the man the more dangerous the conspirator. Respect is prejudice. The loftiest heads must fall first. Condorcet, moved by the love of his wife, is hurried by a friend, M. Pinel, to a sure asylum, No. 24, Rue Servandoni, in one of the obscure quarters of Paris, overshadowed by the high walls and towers of St. Sulpice; there a poor widow, devoted to the unhappy, a Mad. Vernet, has a little house which she lets out to some peaceable lodgers, strangers to her. Pinel conducts Condorcet to this dwelling at the close of day. He wishes to acquaint Mad. Vernet with the name of the friend he is confiding to her hospitality. "No," replies the generous woman, "I will not know his name: I know his misfortune, that is enough! I will save him for God and for you, and not for his name. His retreat will be the safer, and my devotedness the more disinterested."

Condorcet shuts himself up with some books and his thoughts in a room high up in the top floor. He takes an imaginary name. He never goes out, and opens his window only by night, descending only to take his meals like a friend of the family at his hostess' table. One day he recognises on the stairs a conventionist of the Mountain party, by name Marcos.

"I'm lost," exclaimed he to Madame Vernet. "There is a Mountaineer lodging in your house; let me go, for I am Condorcet." "Stay where you are," replies the intrepid woman: "I know Marcos, I answer for him; I will go and fix him with my own safety. I am going to tell him Condorcet is here: he is proscribed; I know it: I give him asylum. If he is discovered, I shall perish with him. One man only knows his secret; if it is revealed,—if Condorcet is guillotined, his blood and mine will recoil on you alone." The Conventionist was discreet. Every day, the proscriber and the proscribed met on the stairs and passed, affecting not to know each other.

Condorcet continued in his hiding place unknown, during the autumn and winter of 1793, and the first months of 1794. In all the noise, and insanity, and fury of liberty, he composed his work "On the Perfectibility of the Human Race." The hope of the philosopher survived the despair of the citizen. He knew that passion is ephemeral, reason eternal, and he confessed it as the astronomer confesses the star even in its eclipse. His solitude was consoled by his labours; it was especially so by the assiduous visits of his young wife, whose splendid beauty and eloquent soul had been the delight of his youth, and the charm of his house. She was a member of the noble family of Grouchy. Thrown, by the ruin of her family and the proscription of her husband, from a state of luxury into indigence, this young

woman gained her subsistence by taking the portraits of persons celebrated by the terror. These upstarts of liberty enjoyed the reproduction of their images by the hand of an aristocrat. On night setting in, Madame de Condorcet would glide unnoticed, into the gloomy alleys which led to her husband's retreat, and give him, in mystery, the hours of consolation and happiness; moments rendered the more precious, by being stolen from death.

Condorcet might have been happy and safe had he only waited for it; but the impatience of his ardent imagination was intolerable, and ruined him. On the return of spring, and the reflection of the April sunbeams on the walls of his chamber, he was seized with such a longing for liberty and motion, such a passion to look on the face of nature and the sky once more, that Madame Vernet was obliged to keep guard over him like a real prisoner, for fear he should elude her benevolent surveillance. He spoke of nothing but the pleasure of rambling in the fields, of sitting under the shady tree, of listening to the song of the birds, the rustle of the leaves, the babbling brook. The first verdure of the trees in the Luxembourg, which he saw from his window, increased this thirst for air and motion to delirium, and they were obliged to keep his door carefully locked, to prevent his escape.

At last, on the 5th April, about ten in the morning, the day being finer and more tempting than usual, Condorcet, under pretext of taking

his meals, descends to the common room: This parlour was close to a door into the street. Scarcely seated, he pretends to have forgotten a book in his room; Madame Vernet unsuspectingly offers to get the volume for him; Condorcet accepts the offer, and, his hostess' back turned, he darts out of the house.

A few steps off, Condorcet meets, in the Rue de Vaugirard, a fellow-boarder of the name of Serret. This young man, trembling for the fugitive, accompanies him. They pass the barrier together, embrace, and separate. Condorcet wanders about all day in the environs of Paris. At nightfall, Condorcet knocked at the door of a country house, where Monsieur and Madame Suard, friends of his, were living, retired in the village of Fontenay aux Roses. It was opened. No one knows what passed in this nocturnal interview, between the proscribed begging a shelter, and his friends dreading to summon death into their house by harbouring an accused. Some affirm that friendship was timid: others that Condorcet generously refused their entreaties for fear of bringing his misfortunes and his crime on the roof he might have slept under. Whatever the reason, after a brief dialogue in whispers, he quitted the park, by a secret gate, in the middle of the night.

We are assured that some hours afterwards he returned, and that he found this same door bolted which he was to have found ajar; conjectures sanctioned and opposed pretty equally by the generous character of Suard, and by the

tenderness of an alarmed wife, who trembles for her husband; a calumny of friendship possibly, which till their conclusion overshadowed the days of those upon whom the blame of the following day was thus thrown.

Night threw her veil over the wanderings and the irresolution of Condorcet; but the following day, towards evening, a man, harassed with fatigue, his shoes all muddy, his face haggard, eye distraught, and beard unshorn, was seen to enter a public house at Clamart. His labourer's dress, woollen cap, and nailed shoes, contrasted with the delicacy of his hands and the whiteness of his skin. He called for eggs and bread, and ate with an avidity which bespoke long abstinence. Being interrogated by the landlord as to his calling, he said he was the servant of a master who had just died. To confirm this assertion, he drew out a pocket book, which contained false papers. The elegance of the pocket book, which contradicted the pretended servitude and the poverty of his attire, betrayed Condorcet. Some members of the revolutionary committee, at table in the public room, arrested him on suspicion, and wished to carry him to the prison of Bourg la Reine. Foot-sore with his long walks of the preceding evening, and utterly exhausted, Condorcet fell into a series of fainting fits; and at last the countrymen were obliged to hoist him on the horse of a poor vine-dresser, who met them on the road. Thrown into the prison of Bourg la

Reine, the philosopher swallowed the poison he always carried with him, as a preventive against the excesses of tyranny. Condorcet fell asleep, and sleep cheated him of his own death, as he cheated the executioner of a head. The National Guards, who were watching at the door, and who had heard no noise in the cell, found only a corpse in place of their prisoner.

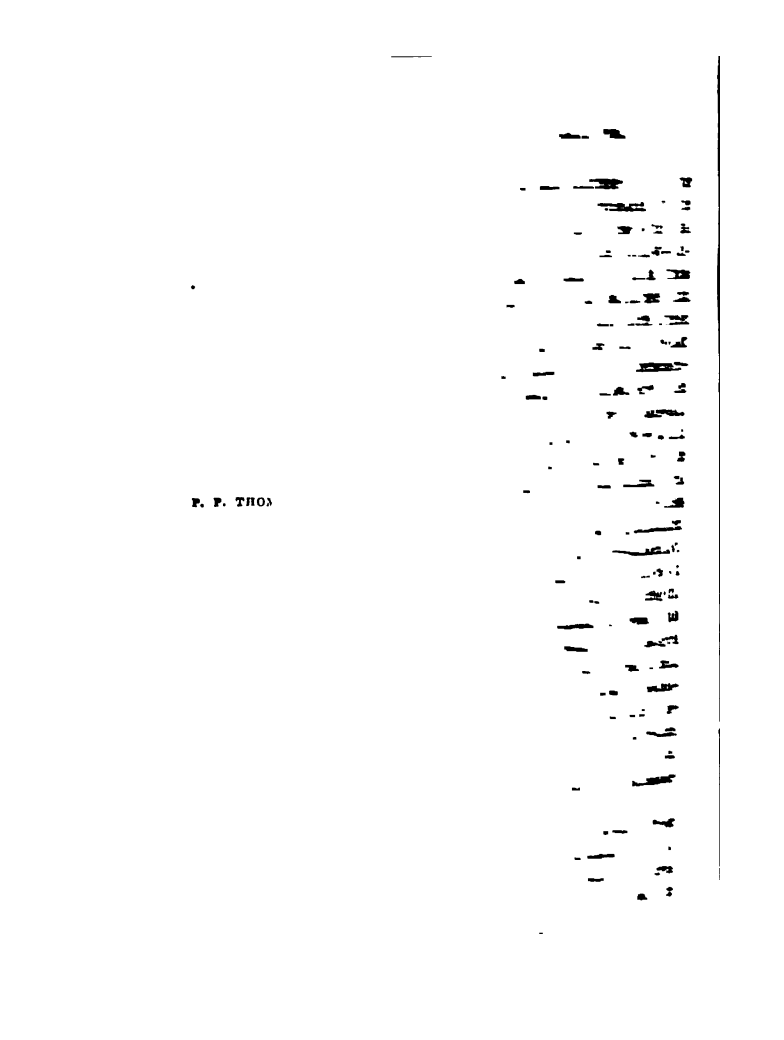
Thus died this Seneca of the modern school. Placed between the two camps, to combat the old world and to moderate the new, Condorcet perished in their shock, without surprise, and even without a groan. He was aware that truths are not given up to man gratuitously; but that they are bought, and that the life of philosophers is the ransom of truth. The period of gratitude to him has not yet arrived. It will come, and the memory of the philosopher will be exculpated from the reproaches cast on the youth and ardour of the patriot.

PETHION.

[Bailly, the philosopher and hero of the famous oath of the *Jeu de Paume*,* was just about retiring from the office of Mayor of Paris at the same moment that La Fayette was retiring from the command of the National Guard. Péthion, who had been one of the staunchest and most vehement opponents of monarchy and aristocracy, and had been one of the deputies sent to bring back Louis to Paris, on his capture at Varennes, in his attempt to escape to the army on the frontier,—was a candidate for the important appointment.]

Péthion was the son of an attorney, at Chartres. The countryman of Brissot, he had been nurtured in the same studies, the same philosophies, the same antipathies with him. They were, moreover, of one mind. The Revolution, which had been the ideal of their youth, had called them on the stage together, but in different parts. Brissot, a writer, political adventurer, journalist, was the man of ideas; Péthion, the man of faction. In his figure, character, and talent, he had that mediocrity,

* The oath of the *Jeu de Paume* was the celebrated oath of the Members of the first Assembly of which Bailly was then President, when the King, in a most disrespectful and irregular manner, interdicted their sittings in their hall at Versailles, and they were compelled to adjourn to the Tennis Court (*Jeu de Paume*). They swore that they would not separate while the wrongs of the people were unredressed, and voted the sitting permanent.



This election gave the Girondins a *locus standi* in Paris.

* * * * *

In proportion as the power wrested from the hands of the King by the Assembly was disappearing, it passed into the Commune of Paris. Municipality, the elementary principle in the formation of nations, is also the last refuge of authority, when they are decomposed. Before falling into the populace, power is stayed for a space in the counsel of civic magistracy. The Hotel de Ville had become the Tuileries of the people. After La Fayette and Bailly, Péthion reigned there. This man was the monarch of Paris; the populace, indeed, with its quick instinct of positions, styled him *King Péthion*. He had bought his popularity, first by his private virtues, which the people always confound with public virtues; and then by his democratic speeches in the Assembly. The skilful equilibrium he maintained at the Jacobins', between the Girondins and Robespierre, had rendered him respectable and important. Friend of Roland, Robespierre, Danton, and Brissot, all at once, and suspected of too intimate a connexion with Madame de Genlis and the Duke of Orleans' party, he always managed to cover himself with a cloak of legal devotion to order, and of constitutional superstition. But his greatest claim to popularity was mediocrity. Mediocrity, it must be confessed, is almost invariably the seal of these idols of the people: whether that the

mass, itself mediocre, has a taste for those who resemble it, or that jealous contemporaries can never soar so high as to do justice to great characters or great virtues; or perhaps that Providence, equally distributing its gifts and faculties, does not permit one man to re-unite in himself, among a free people, those irresistible powers, virtue, genius and popularity; or, it may be, that the constant favour of the multitude is a thing of such a nature, that its price exceeds its value, in the eyes of truly virtuous men; and that it is needful to humble and weaken oneself too much to obtain and retain it. His functions as Mayor of Paris, at a time of trouble, placed him between the King, the Assembly, and the mob. He bearded the King, flattered the Assembly, temporized with crime. The people loved him, as anarchy loves weakness: they knew they could do anything with this man. As Mayor, he had the law in his hand; as a man, he had indulgence on his lips, connivance in his heart. He was the magistrate they wanted, when the *coups d' état* of the faubourgs were the vogue. Péthion would let them be prepared without seeing them, and would legalize them, when accomplished.

[The terrible day of the 20th of July, when 40,000 ruffians passed through the Tuileries, and subjected the King and Queen to their insolence, and, above all, their impure and disgusting language and conduct, was but the display of a preconcerted

plan, in which the Girondins, Jacobins, and Péthion were conspirators. The demonstration missed its aim, however, for the time; and the courage displayed by the King, during this five hours' torture, when each instant might have brought his death, excited a lively sympathy for him and his family, and a reaction took place, in public opinion, in their favour;—so much so, that petitions were signed for the proper guard and fortification of the Tuileries, and for the more energetic protection of the inmates. La Fayette himself came from the frontier, to protest, in person, at the Assembly; but he came unattended, and, less prompt in action than generous in feeling, he did nothing. Had the King only known how to avail himself of the fluctuating and versatile passions of the Parisians, he might at that moment have seized on the opportunity for reinstating some portion of his lost authority.]

Even Péthion could not feign ignorance any longer of an assemblage of 40,000 persons traversing Paris, since the morning, and of the entrance of this armed multitude into the Assembly, and their invasion of the Tuileries. His prolonged absence recalled the sleep of La Fayette on the 6th of October: but the one was an accomplice, the other innocent. Night was approaching; it might conceal, in its shades, disorders and attempts which would exceed the views of the Girondins. Péthion appeared in the court; cries of *Vive Péthion* welcomed him. He was borne from arm to arm to the top steps of the staircase. He penetrated into the hall, where, for three hours, Louis XVI. had been subjected

to these outrages. "I have only just learnt your Majesty's situation," said Péthion. "That is surprising," replied the King, "for it has lasted some time."

Péthion mounted a chair, and made several attempts to harangue the immoveable crowd, without their making any attempt to stir. At last, being uplifted on the shoulders of four grenadiers,—"Citizens and citizennesses, you have exercised your right of petition, with dignity and moderation; you will finish this day as you have begun it. Till now, your conduct has been conformable to law: in the name of the law, I now summon you to follow my example, and retire."

The crowd obeyed.

[Péthion's personal career was not marked by any individuality of character: he was the organ of his party, with the mob, and was placed in a highly important position, as the man best calculated to predispose popular prejudices in favour of the ministerial measures. The attempt to force the King by this demonstration to abdicate, being unsuccessful—to stand still was ruin. A fresh conspiracy was organised, in which Péthion took an active part; at least, all the activity required of him, which was to sit quiet, and permit all that was going down. The attack on the Tuileries was planned; he armed the National Guard, not with a view of protecting the endangered lives of the King and Queen, but to fraternise with the people, if the defence of the Royal palace should be too energetic. The result is well known,—the attack on the Tuil-

eries, in which the Marseillais took the post of honour and danger, and of whom it may be remarked, that the most strenuous efforts were fruitlessly made to corrupt them, by the court, who had the presentiment—the shadow of a coming ill—that something terrible was plotting. The Marseillais were fanatic,—not to be diverted from the path their convictions pointed out to them. The attack was successful; the Tuileries carried, the Swiss Guard massacred, the royal family taken prisoners and sent to the Temple, and a general proscription of the royalists succeeded—too soon to be followed by the appalling massacre of the prisoners in September.

The Girondins felt now that they had gone farther than they intended: it was impossible to check the cry for the death of the King. His inviolability had been once proclaimed, after his return from Varennes; they themselves had incited the people to break it; and now they were swept away by the storm of rage and ferocity they had conjured up; and were themselves dashed to atoms in its destroying course. The death of the King was the prelude to their own downfall.

Our readers have seen the death of Vergniaud and his comrades. Far different was the fate of Péthion. The twenty-two perished in the sight of all the world, upheld by each other till their last moment, and with at least the semblance of martyrdom. The others of the party, including Péthion, Brissot, Gensonné, Guadet, Barbaroux (the intrepid leader of the Marseillais) proscribed, took flight, went to Bordeaux, and thence into their own department—the Gironde. Now sheltered by some hospitable individual; then discovered and forced to

fly, involving their friends and protectors in their misfortunes. In rags, starvation and wretchedness, hunted down and shot like wild beasts, or dragged prisoners, perhaps wounded, through the furious execrations of multitudes, to the guillotine, they were gradually reduced to three — Barbaroux, Buzot, and Péthion.]

Barbaroux, Péthion, and Buzot learned at St. Emilion the arrest and death of their colleagues. The soil, mined all round them, would speedily engulph them. They left their refuge by night, carrying with them, for all provision, a stale loaf, with a piece of cold meat inside it: they had also a few handfuls of green peas in their pockets. They walked a part of the night at random. The long disuse of their limbs, in the lurking-places where they had been languishing for eight months, had enervated their strength, especially that of Barbaroux. His bulky stature, and a premature obesity, rendered him unable to walk.

At daybreak, the three friends found themselves not far from Castillon, a village whose site and name they were then ignorant of. It was the village *fête*. The fife and drum summoned the inhabitants before daylight to the feasting and dancing. Some volunteers passed by them; their guns on their shoulders, singing as they went. The fugitives, absorbed in their thoughts, and troubled by sleeplessness and fever, thought they heard the rappel beating, and that people were spreading abroad in the

fields to catch them. They stood still, some shepherds watching them,—saw a flash, and heard the report of fire-arms,—one of them fell, the others ran away into the woods. On the ground lay a young man of lofty stature and noble countenance, bathed in his blood. He had blown his jaw away, and injured his tongue. They carried him to Castillon. His linen was marked with R. B. They inquired if he was Buzot: he shook his head—Barbaroux? he nodded. Carried to Bordeaux in a cart, and bedewing the road as he went with his blood; he was there recognized by his beauty; and the Guillotine finished by separating his head from his body.

No one knows what the woods and darkness hid, for many days and nights, of the fate of Péthion and Buzot. Mystery, the most appalling of recitals, covers the last moments of Buzot and Péthion. Some labourers found, some days after Barbaroux's death, here and there in a corn-field at the edge of a wood, torn hats, shoes, and some rags of clothing, which covered two heaps of human bones stripped by the wolves. These hats, these clothes and bones, were Péthion and Buzot!

DUMOURIEZ.

Dumouriez, son of a commissary of war, was born at Cambrai, in 1789; although his family resided in the north, his blood was southern. His family, originally of Aix, in Provence, was thoroughly apparent in the light, warmth, and sensibility of his nature. The sky that had fertilized the genius of Mirabeau, was evident in him. His father, an educated soldier, brought him up equally for letters or war. And one of his uncles, employed in the foreign office, fashioned him early for diplomacy. A mind powerful and flexible, he lent himself equally to anything, as fitted for action as for thought; he passed from one to the other with ease, according to the changes of his destiny.

Rebellious to the will of his father, who destined him for the war-office, the pen disgusted him, and he obtained a sub-lieutenancy of cavalry. As aide-de-camp of Marshal d'Armentières, he made the campaign of Hanover. In a retreat, he seized a standard from the hands of a run-away, rallied two hundred dragoons round him, saved a battery of five pieces of cannon, and covered the passage of the army. Left almost alone in the rear, he makes a rampart of his dead horse, and wounds three of the enemy's

hussars. Crippled with ball and sabre wounds, his thigh entangled under the body of his horse—two fingers of his right hand cut off—his forehead cut open—his eyes singed by a shot, he still fights, and only surrenders to the Baron de Beker, who saves him, and carries him to the English camp.

His youth and strength restored him at the end of two months. Destined to form himself to victory, by the example of defeat, and the unskilfulness of our generals, he rejoined Marshal de Soubise and Marshal de Broglie; and assists at the reverses which the French owe to their envious rivalry.

At the peace he joined his regiment in garrison, at Saint Lô. Passing at Point Audemer he stopped at his father's sister's house. A passionate attachment for one of his uncle's daughters, detained him. This love, returned by his cousin, and favoured by his aunt, was opposed by his father. The young girl, in despair, took refuge in a convent. Dumouriez swore to carry her off—he went away. On his road, disappointment overcomes him—he buys opium at Dieppe—shuts himself up in his apartment—writes an adieu to his mistress—a reproach to his father, and poisons himself. Nature saved him, and repentance came on; he went, and threw himself at his father's feet, and was reconciled.

At four-and-twenty, after seven campaigns, he brought from the wars nothing but twenty-two wounds, a decoration, the rank of captain,

a pension of 600 livres, debts contracted in the service, and a hopeless love, which preyed upon his mind. His ambition, spurred on by his love, made him seek in politics that fortune which war still refused him.

There was at that time, in Paris, one of those enigmatical men, at once an intriguer and a statesman. Subaltern and anonymous, they play, under other names, the hidden, but important parts in affairs. Men of police, as well as of policy, the governments that employ and despise them pay their services, not in appointments, but in subsidies. Manœuvrers in politics, they are paid from day to day —they are urged onwards, compromised, and then disavowed, and sometimes even imprisoned. They suffer all, even captivity and dishonour, for money. These men are articles for sale, upon which their talent and utility put the price. Such were Linguet, Brissot, even Mirabeau, in his youth. Such then was one Favier.

Dumouriez, seeing the high roads to fortune closed to him, resolved to attain them by crooked paths; he attached himself to Favier. Favier attached himself to him; and in this commerce of his first years, Dumouriez contracted that character for adventure and temerity, which, during his life, gave his heroism and policy something skilful as intrigue, and rash as a *coup de main*. Favier initiated him into the secrets of courts, and engaged Louis XV. and the Duc de Choiseul, to employ

the talents of Dumouriez in diplomacy and war at the same time.

It was at this moment that the great Corsican patriot, Paoli, was endeavouring to rescue his country from the tyranny of the Republic of Genoa, and to assure to his people an independence of which he, by turns, offered the patronage to England and France. On reaching Genoa, Dumouriez undertook to deceive the Republic, England, and Paoli, all at once. He unites himself with some Corsican adventurers, conspires against Paoli, makes a descent upon the island, which he summons to independence, and was partially successful. He then threw himself into a felucca, to bring to the Duc de Choiseul information as to the new state of Corsica, and to implore the succour of France. Delayed by a storm, and weather-tost for several weeks off the coast of Africa, he reached Marseilles too late; the treaty between France and Genoa was signed. He hastened to Favier, his friend, in Paris.

Favier informed him that he was employed to draw up a memorial, for the purpose of proving to the King and his ministers, the *necessity of supporting the Republic of Genoa against the independent Corsicans;* that this memorial had been demanded of him, secretly, by the Genoese ambassador, and by a *femme de chambre* of the Duchesse de Grammont, favourite sister of the Duc de Choiseul, *interested, like the brothers of the Du Barry, in the equipment of the army;* that 500 louis were

the price of this memorial, and of the blood of the Corsicans; and he offered a portion of this intrigue and its profits to Dumouriez, who pretended to accept this; and then, hastening to the Duc de Choiseul, revealed the manœuvre, —was well received, and was preparing to return, conveying to the Corsicans both the subsidies and arms they expected. Next day he found the minister changed. Dumouriez retired, and pursued his way secretly into Spain. Aided by Favier, who was content with having beaten him, and pitied his candour;—assisted by the Duc de Choiseul, he conspired, with the Spanish Minister and French Ambassador, to effect the conquest of Portugal, whose military topography and means of defence, he was directed to study. The Marquis de Pombal, First Minister of Portugal, conceived suspicions of Dumouriez's mission, and obliged him to quit Lisbon. The young diplomatist, returned to Madrid, learned that his cousin, over-persuaded by the priests, had given him up, and was about to take the veil. He became attached to another mistress, a young Frenchwoman, daughter of an architect established at Madrid; and, for several years, he sleeps away his activity, in the happiness of love. An order of the Duc de Choiseul recalled him to Paris: he hesitated. His beloved herself decided him, and sacrificed herself to his fortune, as if she had from so far the presentiment of his fame. He reached Paris, and was named quarter-master-general.

of the French army in Corsica, where, as everywhere else, he distinguished himself. At the head of a detachment of volunteers, he took the Chateau de Corte, the last asylum and the home of Paoli. He retained for his spoil, the library of that unfortunate patriot. The choice of these books, and the notes with which they were covered, in Paoli's hand, revealed one of those characters which seek their model in the great figures of antiquity. Dumouriez was worthy of this spoil, since he appreciated it above gold. The great Frederic called Paoli the first captain of Europe. Voltaire declared him the conqueror and legislator of his country. The French blushed to conquer him—fortune, to forsake him. If he did not emancipate his country, he deserved to immortalize his struggle. Too great a citizen for so small a people, he did not leave behind a glory in proportion to his country, but to his virtues. Corsica remains in the rank of conquered provinces; but Paoli in the rank of great men.

After his return to Paris, Dumouriez passed a year in the society of the literary men and women of pleasure, who gave to the society of the period the spirit and the tone of a decent orgie. Forming a *liaison* with an old acquaintance of Madame du Barry, he knew this parvenue courtezan, whom libertinism had elevated nearly to the throne. But, devoted to the Duc de Choiseul, the enemy of this royal mistress, and retaining that supple-

ment to virtue, among the French called honour, he did not prostitute his uniform in his court; and blushed to see the old monarch, at the reviews of Fontainbleau, walk on foot, with his hat off, in front of his army, by the side of a carriage, in which this woman displayed her beauty and her empire. Madame du Barry took offence at the forgetfulness of the young officer, and saw contempt beneath his absence. Dumouriez was sent to Poland, on the same errand he had been sent into Portugal. His mission, diplomatic and military, was a secret idea of the King, advised by his confidant, the Count de Broglie, and by Favier, the inspirer of the Count.

It was at the moment when Poland, menaced and half occupied by the Russians, worried by Prussia, forsaken by Austria, was attempting some incoherent movements, in order to bind up her scattered limbs, and to dispute, at least, the remnant of her nationality with her oppressors—the last sigh of liberty which yet stirred the corpse of a people. The King, who feared to clash with the Empress Catharine, to give pretext for hostilities to Frederic, or umbrage to the court of Vienna, was yet desirous of extending to expiring Poland the hand of France; but concealing that hand, and reserving to himself the power, even to cut it off, should it become necessary. Dumouriez was the intermediant selected for this office, the secret Minister of France near the Polish confederates; a general, if necessary,

but an adventurer and disowned general, to rally and direct their efforts.

The Duc de Choiseul, indignant at the humiliation of France, was secretly preparing war against Prussia and England. This powerful diversion in Poland was necessary for his plan of campaign, and he gave his confidential instructions to Dumouriez; but, ousted from the ministry, by the intrigues of Madame du Barry and M. d' Avignon, the Duc de Choiseul was suddenly exiled from Versailles, before Dumouriez arrived in Poland. The policy of France, changing with her Minister, at once destroyed Dumouriez's plans: still, he followed them up, with an ardour and system worthy of better success. He found the Poles debased by misery, slavery, and habitude to a foreign yoke. He found the Polish aristocracy corrupted by luxury, sunk in pleasures, spending in intrigues and words the warmth of their patriotism, in the conferences and confederation of Epéries. A female of remarkable beauty, high rank, and oriental genius, the Countess of Mnizeck, was fomenting, binding or loosing these different parties, according to her ambition, or her amours. Certain orators caused the last accents of independence to resound again, in vain. Certain princes and gentlemen formed meetings, without any understanding with each other; who contended as partisans rather than as citizens, and who boasted of personal fame, without any reference to the safety of their country. Dumouriez availed

himself of the ascendancy of the Countess, and endeavoured to unite these isolated effects,—formed an infantry, an artillery, seized upon two fortresses. Threatened on all sides, the Russians spread in scattered bodies over the vast plains of Poland; he fortified and disciplined the insubordinate patriotism of the insurgents; and contended sucessfully against Suwarrow, the Russians general, whose destiny was, at a later day, to threaten the Republic so closely.

His courage and his efforts were vain: on the first partial success, anarchy and internal feud, the best safeguard of Russian power in Poland, paralyzed all his well-organized efforts; and Dumouriez, in despair, left them to their fate, escaping with difficulty, branding the Poles with the epithet of the Asiatics of Europe. Louis threw him and Favier into the Bastille, for a year; and, on his release, he repaired to Caen, where he met his former mistress, free to accept him; and, true to first love, married her. He was appointed governor of Cherbourg; and to him is owing the conception of those stupendous works which gave France another artificial harbour in the Channel.

At the age of fifty-six, the Revolution found in him a general and statesman, whose years were spent, but not his power. His fire remained, tempered by experience; and, like Cæsar, he was impatient of his fortune, and had a certainty of achieving it. He had foreseen the approach of war, and the necessity for a

general to the Revolution. He was equal to the office.

[France, attacked by the Austrian coalition, under the Duke of Brunswick and Marshal Clairfait. in whose camp the Count d' Artois (Charles X.) and other princes of the blood were, needed all the powers of a first-rate general, and such she found in Dumouriez, who gained a signal and decisive victory in the Belgian campaign, at Jemappes, and made the English troops retreat, in the famous expedition of Walcheren. But success turned his brain: equal, by ability and courage, to any post, his principles were not equal to the temptation of a supreme power, which his position, at the head of a victorious and devotedly-attached army, seemed to hold out to his clutch. Dumouriez entered into treasonable correspondence with the Austrians; he received into his staff several of the Orleans family. These steps were betrayed, and a deputation from the Convention was sent to arrest him. He refused to submit, placed the deputies themselves under arrest, and sent them over to the Austrian lines. The enemy, meanwhile, seized the opportunity presented by his defection, and threw themselves into several strong forts. The meeting of a portion of his troops shewed the general the uncertain tenure of his power. He fled, and barely escaped with life.]

From that day forth, Dumouriez, cursed at home, tolerated abroad, wandered from kingdom to kingdom, seeking a country, and finding none. Object of disdainful curiosity, almost indigent, without countrymen or family, pensioned by England, he was pitied by all

parties. As if to punish him more, Heaven, which assigned him a long life, left him all his genius to torment him in inaction. He wrote, unceasingly, memoirs and military plans for all the wars of Europe and France, for thirty years: he offered his sword, always refused in all causes. Seated, old, and importunate, at the hearth of Germany or England, he durst not break his exile, even when France was thrown open to the proscripts of all parties: he feared that the very soil might reproach his treason. He died at London. His country left his ashes in exile, and did not raise a cenotaph, even on the battle-plain where he had saved her.

[Dumouriez was the first and not the least of that race of warriors, which led the armies of republican and imperial France to conquest, and to the subjugation of Europe, gaining for their country a military glory, imperishable as that of old Rome, but evanescent for want of stable principles, seeking the happiness of the people, and the institution of wise and beneficent policy. Dumouriez emulated the subsequent career of Napoleon; but he lacked that indispensable ingredient of success, and stamp of genius,—a knowledge of opportunity. He was premature. The Convention was weak enough, but the voice of the people and of the army was with them; for their new-found liberty and anarchy had not disgusted them: as yet they had not perished by thousands under the deadly hydra of cruelty, avarice, and lust, which was yet to destroy them indiscriminately; and consequently were not ripe for a

resumption of monarchical and centralized power. Dumouriez' attempt was natural. The war spirit is dangerous everywhere, injurious to a nation, destructive of man's best interests, and the inspiration of selfish ambition. We have seen an instance of its *patriotic* origin in the case of Favier's memorial for the Genoese. The victorious general, at the head of men he has led to conquest and glory, is, at all times, a dangerous citizen, even in a well organized monarchy; but in a republic, pre-eminently so.* The mailed warrior is no friend to liberty. Accustomed to implicit obedience, to the necessary subordination of military grades, and the impersonation of brute force, he is little likely to be the friend of "liberty, equality, and fraternity."]

* The first title of sovereign power, "Emperor," and of nobility, "Duke," are, one the complimentary designation of a favourite general, "*Imperator*;" the other, a military leader, "*Dux*."

MARAT.

[In the progress of the Revolution, the objects, which beyond its philosophy and effects, concentrated the regards of all mankind upon it, were that triumvirate, whose conduct has stigmatized the very name of Revolution as a monstrous outburst of fury and revenge, and not the legitimate expression of a people's will, protesting against the usurpation and abuse of a people's right. I mean Marat, Danton, Robespierre, the incarnations of malevolent brutality and implacable cruelty. Their history is no gratification of morbid curiosity for horrors: they were phenomena in the history of mankind, men of an epoch, not mere reprobates and workers of iniquity. Had they not been representatives of popular will, they had not stood as they did. They were at once the instruments, the scourge, and the martyrs of the Revolution. Their downfal and death, and the respective modes of their resources were the necessary climax to their career, whithout which their lesson would have been incomplete, and mankind would have lost the benefit of the moral to be deduced from their history in its entirety.]

Marat was a writer without talent; a nameless *savant*, thirsting for glory, without having received from Nature or society the means of making himself illustrious. He took his revenge for all that was great, not only upon

society, but on Nature herself. To him, genius was no less odious than aristocracy; and whenever he saw anything brilliant or remarkable, he hunted it down like an enemy. He would have levelled all creation. Equality was his mania, superiority his martyrdom. He loved the Revolution, for that it reduced everything to his standard. He loved it even to blood, because blood wiped away the injury of his long obscurity. He had become the denouncer of the people, knowing that delation is the flattery of all who tremble; and the people were ever trembling. The real prophet of demagoguism, inspired by fury, he gave out the reveries of the night as the conspiracies of the day. Despot over the people, he yet engaged them by his devotion to their interest. Like all oracles, he affected mystery. He lived in the shade, and emerged only at night, communicating with other men with sinister precautions. His dwelling was underground; he took refuge there, invisible to the dagger or poison. His journal had something supernatural to the imagination. Marat had enveloped himself with positive fanaticism, the confidence men had in him savouring of adoration; the fume of the blood he was unceasingly demanding had reached his brain; he was the madness of the Revolution, himself a living madness.

Marat would seem to have absorbed in himself all the hatred fermenting in a society in progress of decomposition. He had made himself the permanent expression of the peo-

ple's rage; while feigning it, he entertained it; he wrote with bile and blood. He had become cynic, to penetrate more deeply into the masses. He had invented a language of frantic rage. Like the first Brutus, he played the madman; but it was not to save his country; it was to push it on to vertigo, and to tyrannise over it, by its own madness. All his pamphlets, echoes of the Jacobins or the Cordeliers, breathed daily disquiet, suspicions, and terrors into the people.

"'Citizens,' he said, 'keep watch round this palace, the inviolable asylum of all the plots against the nation; in it, a perverse queen fanaticises an imbecile king, and there she is, nurturing the wolf whelps of tyranny. Nonjuring priests are blessing the arms of insurrection against the people. They are preparing there a St. Bartholomew for the patriots. The genius of Austria lurks there in the committees, presided over by Antoinette: there a sign is made to foreigners; and the gold and arms of France are thence conveyed by secret convoys; so that the tyrants, whose armies are assembled on the frontiers, may find you famished and disarmed. The emigrants, d'Artois, Condé, receive thence orders for the approaching revenge of despotism. A foreign guard of Swiss mercenaries is not enough for the liberticide projects of Capet. Every night, good citizens, as they pause near this haunt, see ancient nobles entering it, with arms concealed under their clothes. These knights of the

poniard—what are they but the enrolled assassins of the people? What is Lafayette about? Is he the dupe or the accomplice? How is it that he leaves the avenues of this palace free, which will never open except for vengeance or flight? Why should we wait to complete the Revolution, the armed enemy we have in the midst of us only waiting the moment to surprise and annihilate it? Do you not see that bullion is disappearing, that the bank notes are dishonoured? What do these bodies of emigrants on your frontiers mean, and these armies that are advancing to stifle you in an iron band? What are your ministers about? How is it that the property of the emigrants is not confiscated, their houses burnt down, a reward set on their heads? In whose hands are the arms? In the hands of traitors. Who command your troops? Traitors. Who hold the keys of your strong places? Traitors. Traitors everywhere; and, in this palace of treason, the king of traitors—the traitor inviolable and crowned, the king! He affects love of the constitution, they tell you. Snare! He comes to the Assembly. Snare! It's only to cover his escape! Watch! Watch! A great blow is preparing. It is about to break out. If you don't prevent it by a more sudden and more terrible blow, it is all over with the people and with liberty.'

[That such trash should be of any effect on the minds of the people, it is difficult for a calm and

reasoning mind to conceive. But Inflammatory addresses, when spoken, have their immediate influence, because men have not time to review the false deductions, and to detect their utter inconsequence; and in times of such intense popular excitement, the most absurd arguments are received as logical truths, provided they only fall in with the predominant feeling of the hour, the people abandoning themselves to their blind and headlong career, like a runaway horse, incapable of being checked, and only susceptible of sufficient guidance to be kept ont of the way of any serious obstacle, until they have exhausted themselves with their own impetuosity, or dashed themselves to pieces against some impassable barrier.]

Marat had no country. Born at the village of Baudry near Neufchâtel, of obscure parents, in that cosmopolitan Switzerland whose children go to seek their fortune through the world, he had quitted his mountain home, early and for ever. He had been a wanderer to the age of forty, in England, Scotland, and France. Urged backwards and forwards by that vague restlessness which is the prime genius of ambitious men;—schoolmaster, *savant*, doctor, philosopher, politician, he had tried all the ideas, all the professions in which fame or fortune may be obtained. He had found nothing but indigence and noise; Voltaire had not disdained to jest on his philosophy; and the celebrated professor Charles, had pulverized his physics. Marat, irritated, responded to criticism with insult, and had a duel with

Charles. Subsequently, criminal legislation engaged his reflections; and this apostle of murder *en masse* had absolutely decided for abolition of capital punishment Without talent in the expression of his ideas, without knowledge of usages in his association with men, his entrance into society was barred. His wounded and wounding pride closed hearts against him, which his position, his labours, his merits, might have interested. Pursued by need, he had been for some time reduced to sell in person, in the streets of Paris, a specific of his own composition; and his charlatan habits thus acquired, had trivialised his language, lowered his manners, and injured his style of dress, but he had learned to know, to flatter, and to move the populace.

However, his exacerbated and suffering fibres had made him love and yearn towards a people suffering and despised like himself. He had contracted a relationship of oppression and misery with the masses. In avenging himself he had room to avenge them. He wished to turn up society as men turn up the earth with the ploughshare, throwing into shade what was in the sun, and bringing to light what was in the shade. It was not revolution he dreamed of, but the general redress of all the situations and principles set wrong by social disorder, to be re-established violently, and at whatever cost, on the plan of nature. Philosophy resentment, equity vengeance, love of the people hatred of men, ambition

and self sacrifice, assassination and martydom, were all confounded in his system. It was the Utopia of disorder, illumined from above by the light of philosophy, and from below by the flame of social conflagration.

This system was brooding for years in his mind. The Revolution brought it into life. Marat had then attained the, to his genius, low and humiliating occupation of doctor in the stables of the Count d'Artois. Carried away, in the very earliest days of 1789, by the popular movement, he had thrown himself into it to accelerate it. He sold even his bed to pay the printer for his first sheets. Three times he changed the title of his paper, its spirit never. It was the roar of the people, set down each night in letters of blood, and calling every morning for the heads of traitors and conspirators.

This voice seemed to come from the very bottom of society in ebullition. None knew who put it forward. Marat was an ideal being to the people. Mystery was shed around his existence. Madame Roland herself was dubious of it, and enquired of Danton, if there really was a man called Marat? His mystery, his cellars, the lurking places from which these sheets issued, added a prestige to the life name and writings of Marat. The people were thrilled by the danger, the flights, the tenebrous hiding places, the sufferings, the rags and tatters of a man who seemed to be undergoing all this for their sake. Marat did not

quit one retreat, except to dive into another. Pursued, in 1790, by Lafayette, Danton threw a shield of protection on him, and hid him in the house of Mademoiselle Fleury, an actress at the Théatre Français. Suspected in this asylum, he took refuge at Versailles, in the house of one Bassal, curate of the parish of Saint Louis, and afterwards his colleague in the Convention. These brothers of the new religion visited and succoured each other. Decreed by accusation, by the Girondins, Lassource and Guadet, in the days of the Legislative Assembly, Legendre, the butcher, had him in his cellar; and then the vaults of the Cordeliers sheltered him and his presses, till the 10th of August, whence he issued in triumph, to enter the Commune, under Danton's auspices, and organize the massacres of September. Till then a stranger to all parties, but their common dread, the Jacobins, at the requisition of Chabot and Taschereau, recommended him to the electors of Paris. The terrors of his name canvassed on his behalf. He was elected.

He was living then in a small lodging, in a street close to the Cordeliers, with a woman who had attached herself to his misfortunes. This female, still young, bore in her paleness, and thin features, the traces of the misery she had gone through, with and for him. She was the wife of his printer, and had been seduced by Marat, and carried off from her husband. Doomed, for his sake, to

an existence of vagrancy and gloom, she endured also the ignominy of his name. The mistress, accomplice, and servant of Marat, she had undertaken all these conditions, to live or die with him. It was only through this woman, and the printing of his paper, that Marat communed with external life. Deprived of air and rest, never renewing his health by converse with his fellows, working eighteen hours a day, his thoughts fired by tension of mind and solitude, had become a positive mania. In ancient times, he would have been said to be possessed with a demon of extermination. His violent and atrocious logic was always bordering on murder. All his principles demanded blood. His social system could only be founded on corpses, and on the ruin of everything then existing. He pursued his ideal through carnage, and the only crime he acknowledged was to pause before a crime.

His heart, however, was not so depraved as not sometimes to flinch in his theory. He had flashes of virtue, and surprises of sensibility. Two instances, long unknown to history, attest that sometimes the man, beneath the lunatic, was to be touched. During the massacres of the prisoners inspired and directed by him, one of the saviours of Cazotte, after conducting the father and daughter back to their dwelling, came in alarm to recount this proof of his weakness to Marat. Marat wept on hearing the story. "You did well," he remarked

to the astonished assassin, "the father deserved his life for having such a daughter; but, as to the Swiss you let go, that was wrong,—they ought to have been immolated to the very last of them." The anger against his first country, where he had gone through misery and obscurity, could only be appeased by the blood of his countrymen.

The incident of Cazotte and his daughter, here alluded to, was this: It was in the midst of the appalling massacre at the Abbaye, of the Royalist prisoners. After the murder of some hundreds, Cazotte appeared, in his turn, before the headsman. He was an old man of nearly seventy-five: his lofty stature, the whiteness of his long hair, the fire of his eye under his silvered eyebrows, the austere beauty and exaltation of his features, gave him the majesty of a prophet. He had the eloquence and the enthusiasm of one. Extravagantly imaginative in his writing, ecstatic of soul in his piety, a good man in his life, he recognized, in the Revolution, a fiery ordeal through which God made his children of that century pass, to recognize his own, and to glorify them in their martyrdom. He offered his blood, and was impatient to sacrifice it. His daughter had voluntarily followed him into his dungeon. Foreseeing the massacre, she had sought and found protection among the Marseillais who guarded the prisoners. The touching youth, the filial piety, the amiable familiarity of the young girl, had softened the roughness of these

men. They had promised her her father; they kept their word. Cazotte, interrogated by the tribunal, answered like a man who wishes obstinately to die. "My wife, my children!" he exclaimed, "weep not for me! Do not forget me, but, above all, remember God. I wish to die as I have lived; faithful to my God and my king."

His daughter, unable to prevent him from throwing his life away, rushed to death with him.

The compassionate Marseillais followed her into the court, they put down with their hands the sabres and pikes levelled at her. They asked pardon for the two lives, inseparable from each other. They made their *protégée* traverse this slough of blood, restored her to her father, and conducted them to a place of safety.

This was but a respite to Cazotte. Some days afterwards he was retaken, and imprisoned apart from his child. What the assassins had left undone, the judge completed;—Cazotte perished.

Another incident, related of an access of humanity, is as follows.—

Some days before these massacres, a young girl of beauty and spotless innocence, ascertained, from the rumours of the prisons, that the inmates were to be slaughtered. Her father, an *employé* in the Tuileries, before the 10th of August, had been confined in the Abbaye. She had no mother. Her despairing tender-

ness drove her from door to door, seeking his pardon. None were opened. Manuel, Danton, Paris, refused to see her. Each man that passed seemed to knell the approaching slaughter. She devoted herself, like Judith, but not for her city, but for her father. She made up her mind to the sacrifice of her virtue. The name of "the friend of the people" occurred to her mind. She discovered a woman who was acquainted with Marat. She gave this person a letter for him. This letter, in which she offered to give herself up to him, as the price of her father's existence, was remitted to the hands of the friend of the people. The bearer depicted the charms, the youth, the purity of the writer. Marat opened the letter, with an equivocal smile. "Desire this child to repair alone, this evening, to the terrace at the side of the water. The man who shall accost her without speaking, and takes her arm, will be Marat. Let her follow him in silence." The young woman obeyed. Marat made his appearance. He led the unknown, mute and trembling, to an extremity of the Champs Elysées, entered a *traiteur's*, asked for a private room, and ordered a light repast. Whilst it was preparing, Marat approached, took the young girl's hand, whilst she durst not raise her eyes. At last, she fell at his feet, bursting into tears. "I alarm you," said Marat, in a voice of emotion. "I horrify you, and yet you consent to give yourself up to me." "I accept any terms that will save my father," sobbed the victim. "Well, well, rise

up; this sacrifice is enough for me. I wished to see how far filial virtue would go. I should be a scoundrel to abuse such devotedness, and will not sully what I so much admire. To-morrow your father shall be restored to you." He took her arm again, and reconducted her to the door of her house.

Marat's exterior was the index to his mind—little, lean, bony; his body seemed burnt up by some inward fire. Spots of bile and blood marked his skin. His eyes, though prominent, and full of insolence, seemed to be dazzled by broad daylight. His wide mouth, open, as if to launch forth insult, wore the habitual curve of disdain. He knew the bad opinion men had of him, and seemed to brave it. He carried his head high, and a little inclined to the left, as if in defiance. The *ensemble* of his figure, seen from afar, and illumined from above, had power and distinction, but disorder. All the points were divergent, like his thoughts; Robespierre's, on the contrary, were all convergent and concentrated, like a system—the one, constant meditation; the other, continual explosion. The converse of Robespierre, who affected neatness and elegance, Marat affected carelessness and dirtiness of person.

[Marat was the head, and Danton (who was then in far greater influence than he—though not at the acme of power he afterwards attained) the hand of the frightful and atrocious slaughter of the Swiss

Guards and other royalists, known as the Massacre of September. Danton afterwards took the responsibility of the crime, and justified it; while, strange to say Robespiere (who was cognizant, with the rest of the men of power, of what was preparing,) was quite unnerved by the business, and even reproached his friend St. Just with the indifference to the sea of blood about to be spilt he manifested, in his ability to sleep while such tremendous events were executing.

Marat's power and popularity were not owing to anything but his frantic appeals to the people, his violent hatred of royalty and aristocracy, and the stimulus he was ever applying by his appeals to their passions, with his denunciations, and hideous calls to murder and outrage. For a long period, kept under by the genius of Danton, Marat had been unable to make any preeminent political position for himself; but after the death of the king, and the weakness displayed by the Girondin ministry, he determined to emancipate himself from the trammels of Danton's tutelage, and even dared to match himself against both Danton and Robespierre.

Robespierre only held out to the people the reign of popular laws, which should divide social prosperity more equitably between all classes: Marat promised general uproar and instant plunder. The one held the people by their reason; the other egged them on by their folly: Robespierre would be respected, Marat feared.

[Marat's personal character has the more interest at this epoch, inasmuch as he professed the most ardent friendship to the working classes, compassionated their misery, dwelt on their wrongs, and was actuated throughout by a wish of benefitting

them. The following address, in "The People's Friend," his journal, is of great interest.]

"My readers will, I hope, pardon me, if I talk about myself to-day, and that neither through egotism nor fatuity, but in the desire the better to serve the public interest. What harm if I represent myself as I really am, when the enemies of liberty are ever painting me as a madman, a cannibal, a tiger athirst for blood, in order to throw obstacles in the way of the good I seek to work out? Born with a tender heart, a fiery imagination, an impetuous, frank, tenacious character, a straightforward mind, a heart open to all exalted passions, and especially to love of glory, and brought up with the tenderest care in the paternal home, I reached manhood without having ever abandoned myself to the heat of passions. At twenty-one I was pure, and was for a long time already devoted to study and meditation.

"It is to nature I owe the cast of my soul: but to my mother I owe the development of my character; it is she who made love of justice and of man spring up in my heart. It was through my hands the alms passed that she used to bestow on the needy. The accent of interest she had in speaking to the unfortunate, inspired me early with the tenderness she had for them. At eight, my moral sense was already formed. At that early age, I could not endure the sight of the ill-treatment exercised

against my fellows. The sight of a cruelty raised my choler; the spectacle of injustice made my heart beat as at a personal insult.

"In my childhood my body was feeble. I knew neither the joys, nor the follies, nor the sports of children. Docile and assiduous, my masters gained everything from me by mild means. I was never chastised but once: I was then eleven years old. The punishment was unjust. They shut me up in a room—I opened the window, and threw myself into the street.

"Love of glory was, at all ages, my darling passion. At five, I would have liked to be master of the school; at fifteen, professor; at eighteen, an author; at twenty, a creator, just as now my ambition is to immolate myself for my country! A thinker from my youth upwards, toil of mind has become my sole necessity, even in illness. My sweetest pleasures I have found in meditation, in those peaceful moments when the soul contemplates with admiration the aspect of the heavens; or, when returned upon herself, she seems to listen in silence, to weigh in the balance of happiness the vanity of human greatness, to pierce the sombre future, to seek man beyond the tomb, and to carry a restless curiosity into eternal destinies.

"I have spent twenty-five years in retreat, in reading, and meditation on the best works of morals, philosophy, and politics, with a view to extracting the soundest conclusions from them. In eight volumes of metaphysical researches,

twenty of discovery in natural philosophy, I have carried with me in all my inquiries a sincere desire to be useful to humanity, a holy respect for truth, the sentiment of the limits of human wisdom. The charlatans of the scientific body,—your d'Alembert, Condorcet, Laplace, Lalande, Monge, and Lavoisier, wished to be alone before the world: I could not even pronounce the titles of my works. For five years I groaned under this vile oppression, when the Revolution was ushered in by the convocation of the States-General. I soon saw whither matters were tending, and I began to breathe again, in the hope of seeing humanity avenged, of meeting to break its fetters, and of rising to my own place.

"That was but a pleasant dream! too soon, alas! to fade away. A cruel illness threatened me with the grave. Not wishing to quit life without doing something for mankind, I composed on my bed of pain, 'An Offering to my Country.' Restored to life, I only occupied myself with the means of serving the cause of liberty. But I might have amassed millions, simply by selling my silence,—yet here I am in misery."

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These lines reveal the soul of Marat—a phrenzy of glory, a perpetual explosion of vengeance against social inequality, and a love for the suffering classes, perverted to ferocity against the rich and happy.

His life was as poor and laborious as the indigence he represented. He gained his bread with his pen; indefatigable working of the spirit, a chronic anger, prolonged watchings, inflamed his blood, hollowed his eyes, tinged his complexion, and gave to his physiognomy the hectic heat and nervous trembling of fever. He was as prodigal of his own as of others lives. Even when his long and frequent illnesses tied him to his bed of anguish, he did not cease to dash down with the rapidity of lightning, all the sudden thoughts the ferment of his dreams drove up into his imagination. The printer's men came to fetch away sheet by sheet, the sheets saturated with his hatred; and, an hour afterwards, the public criers and placards spread his sentiments all over Paris. His existence was a constant and furious dialogue with the mob. The woman he lived with considered him a benefactor misunderstood by the world, and whose first confidence she was the recipient of. Marat, brutal and insulting to all, moderated his tone and softened his look for this female. She was called Albertine. There is no man so luckless or so odious in the world, to whom fate has not given woman in his labour, in his death, in his crime, or his virtue.

Like Robespierre and Rousseau, Marat had a preternatural faith in his principles; and he respected himself in his chimeras, as an instrument of God. He had written a work on the immortality of the soul. His library was com-

posed of some fifty volumes, spread on a deal board, nailed against the bare wall of his room. Montesquieu and Raynal, well marked, were found there. The Testament was always open on his table. "The Revolution," he used to say, to those who might be surprised,—"the Revolution is all entirely in the Testament; nowhere has the people's cause been more energetically pleaded, nowhere have more maledictions been cast upon the rich and the powerful of this world. Jesus Christ," and he bowed with respect at the name—"Jesus Christ is the master of us all."

Some few friends visited Marat in his dull solitude. They were Armonville, the Septembrist of Amiens; Pons de Verdun, an adulatory poet of all powers; Vincent, Legendre, sometimes Danton, for Danton, who had long protected Marat, began to fear him. Robespierre despised him, as a disgraceful caprice of the people. He was jealous of him, but he did not stoop so low to beg popularity. When Marat and he encountered in the Convention, they exchanged looks full of insult and mutual contempt. "Base hypocrite!" muttered Marat. "Vile scoundrel!" whispered Robespierre. But they were of one accord in their hatred of the Girondins.

The hour of Marat's triumph was the signal for his death. In alliance with Robespierre and Danton, this triumvirate succeeded in effecting the ruin of the Girondin ministry. The imprisonment of some, among whom were

the eloquent Vergniaud, and the celebrated Madame Roland, and the proscription of the rest of the party, while it raised the enthusiasm of the Parisians to its fullest height, in favour of their idol, created some sympathy, in the provinces, in favour of the fallen party, who probably formed the purest and most respectable faction in the Revolution. Several of the exiles betook themselves to Caen, in Normandy, where their misfortunes and addresses excited much compassion for themselves, and attachment to the republican principles of which they were the organs. Among other individuals affected by these circumstances was Charlotte Corday, whose name is immortalized and enshrined in the good esteem of men, albeit by an act of crime; for she was a public benefactor, and achieved the destruction of a monster and scourge, at the foreknown sacrifice of her own life.

After deliberating on and maturing her plan of action, she bid adieu to her few relatives, and received her father's blessing, under the pretence of going to England. She betook herself to Paris, and made acquaintance with the few members of the Girondins yet at liberty. From them she learned such particulars as she required to know, of the habits of life and residence of the demagogue, without, however, betraying herself, or exciting the most remote suspicion of her project. Her first idea had been the public immolation of the public accuser; but this she speedily found

was impossible, for he no longer attended the sittings of the Convention. She accordingly wrote to him two anonymous letters, and appointed an interview at his house, on pretence of communicating to him matter of public importance. She succeeded in forcing her way to his presence, in spite of the precautions observed against the unauthorized approach of strangers, precautions made requisite by the constant fear of assassination he laboured under, as the reward of his atrocious informations against the life and happiness of innocent families. The following is the description of the closing scene.—

Marat lived on the first floor of a dilapidated house, in the Rue des Cordeliers, now Rue de l'Ecole de Medicine, No. 20. The numerous works piled upon the floor, the public leaves, still wet, thrown on the chairs and tables, printer's men going in and out unceasingly, women employed in folding and addressing the pamphlets and papers, the worn stairs, the ill-swept doorway,—all attested the movement and disorder habitual about a man of business, and the perpetual influx of the citizens, to the home of a journalist and coryphœus of the people.

This abode displayed, so to say, the pride of poverty. The misery, though affected, was real; it was the ensign of the tribune. Marat's establishment was that of an humble artizan. We know the woman who managed his house. A single servant assisted her in the cares of the

household, while a commissionnaire, named Laurent Basse, did the messages and out-door work.

The devouring activity of the writer had not slackened under the slow malady that consumed him. The inflammation of his blood seemed to fire his very soul. Sometimes in his bed, at others, in his bath, he never ceased writing, apostrophizing, abusing his enemies, urging on, the Convention and the Cordeliers. Offended at the silence of the Assembly to messages he had sent, he was just addressing them a new letter, wherein he threatened to have himself conveyed in a dying state to the Convention, to put the Representatives to the blush, for their effeminacy, and to dictate the necessary murders to them. He left them no repose more than himself. Full of the presentiment of death, he seemed to fear that the supreme hour, all too rapid, might not leave him time to immolate criminals enough. More eager to slay than live, he was hastening to send before him all the victims possible.

Charlotte was ignorant of the difficulties of access to him, but she suspected them. She descended from her carriage, on the opposite side of the street, in front of Marat's dwelling. The day was declining, especially in this sombre quarter. The portress at first refused to let the young unknown visitor into the yard, but she insisted and had cleared some of the stairs, recalled in vain by the door-keeper. At this noise, Marat's mistress opened

the door and refused admission into the room for the stranger. The undertones of this altercation between the women reached the ears of Marat in his bath, who understood that this was the person from whom he had received the two letters. With a loud voice of command, he ordered her to be let in.

Whether from jealousy or distrust, Albertine obeyed with repugnance and grumbling. She introduced the young girl into the little place where Marat was, and on retiring she left the door half open in order to hear the invalid's least word or movement.

The room was feebly illumined; Marat was in his bath. In this compelled repose of his body, he would not permit repose to his mind. An ill-planed plank, placed on the bath, was covered with papers, open letters, and sheets begun. In his right hand he held the pen, which the stranger's entrance had suspended over the page. The sheet of paper was a letter to the Convention, to demand from it judgment and proscription of the last Bourbons tolerated in France. By the side of the bath, an enormous billet of oak, like a block placed on end, bore a leaden inkstand, of the rudest workmanship: impure source, whence had flowed for three years so much delirium, so much denunciation, so much blood. Marat, covered up in his bath, with a dirty ink-stained sheet, had only his head, his shoulders, and right arm above water. There was nothing

in the man's appearance calculated to propitiate a woman, and to stay the stroke.

Charlotte avoided fixing her look on him, for fear of betraying her horror at his aspect. Standing up, her eyes downcast, her hands drooping near the bath, she waits while Marat interrogates her as to Normandy. She answers briefly, gives her answers the meaning and colouring likely to flatter the presumed disposition of the demagogue. He next asks the names of the Deputies, refugees at Caen. She repeats them; he puts them down, then when he has finished writing their names, "That's good," he says, with the accent of a man sure of his revenge;—"good! before a week's over they shall go to the guillotine."

At these words, as though Charlotte's heart had been waiting a final crime to resolve her to strike the blow, she draws from her bosom the knife, and plunges it, with supernatural force, to the very haft, into Marat's heart. With the same movement Charlotte withdraws the ensanguined blade from the body of the victim, and lets it fall on the floor. "Here, my dear! come to me," shrieked Marat, and expired instantaneously.

DANTON.

Danton, whom the Revolution found an obscure lawyer at the *Châtelet*, had grown with its growth. He had, at its commencement, that celebrity readily accorded by the crowd to men they see and hear of everywhere. He was one of those who seem to spring from the very froth of revolution, floating on the tumult, till it swallow them up. In him, all was athletic, rude, and vulgar, like the masses. He could not but please them, for he was of them. His eloquence imitated the murmur of the crowds, and his sonorous voice was like the roaring of the mob. His irresistible gesticulation gave impulse at their meetings, while his short decisive phrases had the martial conciseness of command. Ambition was his only policy. Without settled principles, he only liked democracy for its turbulence. It was his element, and he plunged into it, not seeking empire so much as the mere sensual pleasure a man finds in the accelerated movement which bears him along. He intoxicated himself with revolutionary vertigo, as other men do with wine. But he carried his drunkenness off well; for he ever had the superiority of calmness, amid the confusion he used to create, solely to control it, preserving his own coolness in fury, and his gaiety in passion. His

words decided the clubs, in the height of their rage. He could amuse and excite the people at the same time; and, contented with this double ascendant, he laid aside all respect for them, speaking neither of principles nor of virtue, but of strength. He himself adored only force, and he made everything his means of action. He was always the statesman of circumstance, playing with the movement, without any other aim than the terrible game, without any other stake than his life, or without other responsibility than chance.

Such a man must have been equally indifferent to despotism as to liberty. His contempt of the people would rather indeed incline him to tyranny. To those who detect none of the divine nature in men, the better part seems to enslave them. Whom we do not respect we cannot serve. He was not with the people, except as he was of the people, and that it seemed the people would triumph; and he would have betrayed them, as he served them, unscrupulously. The court well knew the tariff of his convictions; he menaced, that it might have an interest in buying him. His most revolutionary movements were only to increase his own price. His hand was in every intrigue, and his probity never took alarm at any offer of corruption. He was bought daily, and next morning was again in the market. Mirabeau, La Fayette, Montmorin, M. de Laporte, the Intendant of the Civil List, the Duc d'Orleans, the King, had the key to

his venality; and from these impure sources money had flowed into his treasury, without remaining there. Any one else would have been ashamed before the men and the parties who had the secret of his weakness; but he was not,—he looked them in the face without a blush. He was the centre of all those men who only seek greatness in events. But while the others had only the baseness of vice, Danton's vices partook of the heroic—his intellect was almost genius. He had the flash of the moment. Scepticism, which was the infirmity of his mind, was, in his eyes, the vigour of his ambition, and he cultivated it as the element of future greatness. He pitied anybody who respected anything. Such a man had of necessity a vast ascendancy over the instincts of the multitude. He agitated them, kept them at boiling point, and always ready to embark on any sea, were it even of blood.

* * * * *

At the moment of his popular career, people asked, what was the cause of his rising ascendancy?—Where he came from?—Who he was? They asked aloud his origin, his first appearance in the scene of his connexion with the men of the day. They sought the cause of his popularity in mystery, when it was to be found in nature.

Danton came from the intermediate ranks, and from the very heart of the nation. His family were of ancient name and respectable

conduct, and established at Arcis-sur-Aube. They had a country estate in the neighbourhood of that little town. Danton's father died young. His mother married again to a manufacturer of Arcis-sur-Aube, who possessed a small silk factory The half-city, half-country house, where Danton's infancy passed, may still be seen, with its garden, on the border of the Aube.

His step-father, M. Ricordin, tended his education as he would have done that of his own son. The child was open and communicative, and was loved in spite of the plainness of his features and his turbulence; for his ugliness beamed with intelligence, and his temper was soon appeased, and would repent at the mother's slightest caress. He studied at Troyes, capital of Champagne. Rebellious against discipline, idle at work, yet beloved by his masters and fellow pupils, his rapid comprehension placed him, in a twinkling, on a par with the most assiduous. He learnt nothing, he grasped all. His comrades called him Catiline; a name he accepted, and would sometimes play at sedition and tumult with them, which he stimulated or calmed down by his harangues, as though he had been rehearsing, at school, the part for his actual career.

Monsieur and Madame Ricordin, now advanced in years, handed over to him, at the conclusion of his education, the moderate fortune left by his father; and he came up to

Paris to finish his studies, and bought a place of counsellor to the Parliament. He practised but little, and without any fame; he despised chicanery. His soul and his speech had the proportions of the great causes of the people and the throne, which the Constituent Assembly was now agitating. Danton, attentive and enthusiastic, was impatient to take part in it. He sought out the brilliant men whose words were rousing up France. He attached himself to Mirabeau, and formed connexion with Camille Desmoulins, Marat, Robespierre, Péthion, &c., and all the agitators, whether leaders or subalterns, who then stirred Paris. He passed his days at the tribunes of the Assembly, the promenades, the *cafés*, and his nights at the clubs. Some happy hits, a short harangue or two, some of his mysterious thunderclaps, and particularly his mane-like head of hair and gigantic stature, attracted observation. But under these purely physical qualities of the man, the chiefs recognised profound common sense, and an instinctive knowledge of the human heart. Under the agitator's cloak they detected the statesman. Danton, in truth, was reading history, studying the orators of antiquity, and exercising himself in true eloquence,—that which enlightens while impassioning,—and was meditating a part far above his actual one. He only required the movement to heave him up sufficiently to sway it afterwards.

He married Madlle. Charpentier, the daughter

of a lemonade dealer in the *Quai de l' Ecole*. This young woman took empire over him by her tenderness, and led him insensibly from the loose habits of his youth to more regular domestic habits. She extinguished the tempestuousness of his passions, but without being able to extinguish that which survived all the others,—the ambition of a great destiny. Danton retired in a little lodging in the *Cour du Commerce*, near the lodging of his father-in-law, lived in studious mediocrity, only receiving a small number of friends, admirers of his talent, and attached to his fortune. The most attentive were Camille Desmoulins, Péthion, and Brun. From these private meetings proceeded signals for great seditions. The secret subsidies of the court found their way there, to tempt the cupidity of the chieftain of the revolutionary youth. He did not repulse the offers, but made use of them, to moderate and excite by turns the agitations of opinion.

By this marriage he had two sons, who, left orphans by his death, retreated, alarmed at their name, to their paternal heritage at Arsis sur Aube, where they are still living in retirement.

Danton was the head of the *Cordeliers*, whose origin I have before given, as exceeding the Jacobins in their boundless agitation and turbulence; and he was the chief actor in the tremendous assembly at the *Champ de Mars*, where he called for the dethronement of the King: and subsequently was one of the men

who voted for the execution of the King. He was essentially a demagogue, fluctuating from day to day, and ever consulting his own interests while stimulating the mob to the wildest excesses. He attached himself at one time to the Girondin party, so long as they retained power, but ultimately seceded from them. Although far superior to Robespierre in ability, his genius quailed before the other's unswerving perseverance, his earnestness and truthfulness. Danton acted only for himself, and sacrificed everything to the gratification of personal ambition and his own aggrandisement. Robespierre was sincerely attempting to carry out what he believed a great principle, in which he thought he should find the great arcanum of man's welfare developed; and, disinterested in its pursuit, was ready, and actually did sacrifice all personal advantage, and even life, in the pursuit. Danton was the favourite of the people. Robespierre had its respect and fear. The manifestation of the gentler sympathies of human nature, in a man so engaged in the work of destruction, and so utterly regardless of the feelings of others, will be read with interest. Happy that Nature denies the entire consistency of the devil nature, even in the most extreme wickedness, and preserves a remnant of good, as if to justify herself, and prove the possibility of his angelic origin and destination. In the midst of party struggles, and when his mind was engrossed by the cares of ambition, and he was actually organizing

insurrection to displace his quondam friends the Girondin ministry, he was informed by letter, from his brother-in-law, of the severe illness of his wife; and he had hurried away from Condé, whre he was with the army, to receive the last sigh of the companion of his youth. Death had outstripped him. Descending from the carriage, at the door of his house, they gave him the news, that his wife had just expired. They wished to withdraw him from the mournful spectacle; but Danton, who, under the impetuosity of his political passions, and under the eccentricities of his career, preserved a tenderness, mingled with respect, for the mother of his two children, put aside the friends who were disputing the entrance with him, mounted frantically to her chamber, rushed towards the bed, raised the sheet, and covering the scarcely cold body of his wife, passed the whole night in groans and sobs.

None dared to interrupt his grief, and to take him from the coffin, and hurry him to sedition. The projects of the conspirators were adjourned, in the absence of their chief.

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After the death of his wife, he plunged with his companions into those mad orgies, passing from affairs of state, and the most momentous deliberations, to riot and debauchery, scenes, in fact, quite in accordance with the state of society at large. Since the death of his wife, he had been suffering from a sense of isola-

tion; and now, enamoured of a youthful beauty, a Madlle. Gély, only sixteen, who had, however, been mentioned by his first wife as the mother of their children, should she herself die, he addressed himself to her parents; and, with all the ardour of his nature, to gratify their religious scruples, was married by a priest, and actually went to confession. The desire of peace at home, the reproaches of his wife's family for the part he had taken in the death of the king, urged him to an attempt to reseat the Orleans dynasty on the throne, in the person of Egalité; but the Duke refused the offer, as either culpable or premature, and Danton's peaceable projects were thrown to the winds, by the ill-timed denunciation of his desire for restoration of royalty by the Girondin party, who had either discovered or suspected his treaty, and with whom he was meditating an alliance, their moderate views suiting the altered state of his mind. Standing on the verge of a precipice, he had no resource but to rush once more into the excesses of his political career; and, replying to the Girondin party with counter accusation and taunts of their own moderation, he appealed to the formidable Mountain, who responded to his apostrophes by prolonged acclamation, and ended by throwing himself into the arms of the Jacobins. This was the downfal of the Girondins.

Danton, and his friends, Camille Desmoulins, Herault de Séchelle, Westermann, and

others, crushed in their struggle with the power of Robespierre, were brought to the scaffold. Up to the last moment, Camille Desmoulins, who passionately adored his wife, did not cease hoping that Robespierre would call to mind their old friendship; and once in the fatal cart he adjured the people to take pity on him. Danton was firm and immovable. An unalterable atheist, he felicitated himself in having enjoyed life, and made some stir in the world, while he could; and as for the people, he treated them with sovereign contempt, desiring his less stoically-minded companion to leave the rabble to themselves.

Herault de Séchelle was the first to descend from the cart. With the impulse and the tranquillity of a friendship which binds heart to heart, he inclined his face to Danton, to kiss him. The executioner separated them. "Ruffian!" exclaimed Danton, "at any rate, you can't hinder our heads from kissing each other presently in the basket."

Camille Desmoulins then mounted. He had resumed his calmness at the last moment. He twisted his wife's tresses between his fingers (he had asked Danton, when they were pinioning him, to place a lock of her hair in his hand, that he might at least hold part of her in his arms when dying) as though his hand sought freedom to carry the precious relic to his lips. He approached the instrument of death, quietly inspected the blade, trickling with the blood of his friends; then, turning

towards the populace, with uplifted eyes, he exclaimed, "That, then, is the end of the first apostle of liberty! The monsters who assassinate me will not survive me long!" "Send these curls to my mother-in-law," were his last words to the executioner. His head fell.

Danton ascended last of all. Never had he ascended the tribune more proudly, or more imposing. He moved round the scaffold, as though he had been taking the measure of his pedestal; and he looked down on the people, on both sides, with an air of pity. He seemed to say, "Look at me well; you ne'er shall look upon my like again." Nature, for an instant, levelled his pride. A strong man's cry, wrung from him by the recollection of his young wife, escaped him. "O, my beloved," he cried, with humid eyes, "I shall see thee no more." Then, as if reproaching himself for this return towards existence, he exclaimed, "Come, Danton, no weakness." And moving towards the headsman, authoritatively, "You will shew my head to the people, it is well worth the trouble." His head was off. The executioner, obedient to his last behest, picked up the head from the basket, and walked round the scaffold with it. The crowd clapped their hands.

So perish favourites!

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Thus, before the people, died a man, to whom the very scaffold was a stage, and who wished to die applauded, at the close of the

tragic drama of his life, as he had been at its beginning and middle. He wanted nothing of the great man, save only virtue. He had nature, a cause, genius, exterior, destiny, death. He had not conscience. He played the great man; he was not one. There is no greatness in an actor's part; greatness is faith. Danton had the sentiment, oftentimes the passion of liberty: he had not its faith; for he internally professed no other faith than fame.

In him the Revolution was an instinct, not a religion. He served it as the wind serves the tempest, in raising the froth and playing with the waves. He understood only its movement, not its direction, and was more inebriated than enamoured by it. He is the representative of the masses, not of the leaders of the epoch. Like them, he displayed agitation, force, ferocity, generosity, by turns; a man of temperament, more than of thought, of element more than intelligence, he was nevertheless a statesman, more than any of those who undertook to handle affairs and men, in those Utopian days; and he had the political instinct, more, indeed, than Mirabeau himself, if by a statesman we mean a man who comprehends the mechanism of government independently of its ideal. He had dived into Machiavelli for all the lore that teaches how power or tyranny in states may be upheld. He knew the weakness and vices of the people, but not their virtues. He had no suspicion of what formed the sanctity of governments, for

in men he did not see God, but chance. He was one of those admirers of *antique Fortune* who adore in her only the divinity of success. He was conscious of his value as a statesman, with so much the more complacency, that the democracy was so far beneath him, and he admired himself as a giant in the midst of these dwarfs. He made a show of his superiority like an upstart of genius; he was astonished at himself; he crushed others; he proclaimed himself the one head of the Republic. After caressing the populace, he braved it like a wild beast he dared to devour him. His vice was as audacious as his face. He pushed political defiance even to crime in the least tolerant days of September. He had defied remorse, but he was conquered; he was besieged by it; blood followed his track; a secret horror mingled with the admiration he inspired; he felt this horror himself, and would fain have severed himself from the past. An uncultivated being, he had his fits of humanity as of fury; he had low vices, but generous passions; in a word, he had a heart. This heart, in the end, was returning to good by sensibility, pity, and love. He deserved to be at one and the same time cursed and regretted. He was the colossus of the Revolution,—the head of gold, the bosom of flesh, shoulders of brass, feet of a goat. He abased, the pinnacle of the Convention seemed less lofty; he was the cloud, the thunder, the lightning. In losing him, the mountain lost its summit.

ROBESPIERRE.

The imagination of most readers, who have only superficially examined the records of those wonderful events, of which the men whose nature we seek to pourtray were the heroes, is apt to judge of the gigantic characters who figured on this astounding scene only by the evidence of their outward actions, which were too often forced upon them by circumstances or by the imperative necessity of maintaining their own position, (the loss of which was little less than suicidal,) by a series of actions from which, under other circumstances they would, in all probability, have recoiled with horror. Amongst the band of fearful names, which, in those days of retribution for past violation of every political and social right, struck terror into the public mind, that of Robespierre stands conspicuous. Without undertaking the office of his apologist, I may remind the reader, that it was impossible for a man who had put his hand to the plough to draw back; and while we may execrate the crimes of which Robespierre was guilty, still we must consider the circumstances that impelled him to them, and made their consummation the exigency of his own career, as well as an integral and essential part of the Revolution. Above all, we must give the man, from his very outset, credit for sincerity.

In the shade as yet, and at the rear of the leaders of the National Assembly, a man almost

unknown began to move, agitated by some uneasy thought, which seemed to interdict silence and repose. He would attempt to speak at every opportunity, and would attack quite indifferently all the orators, not excepting Mirabeau. Hurled from the tribune, he would re-ascend it on the morrow. Humiliated by sarcasms, silenced by groans, disowned by every party, continually disappearing among the great athletes who claimed public attention, he was vanquished times without number, but never exhausted. One would have said that some inward and prophetic genius had revealed to him the vanity of all the talent before him, the omnipotence of will and patience, and that some voice, audible to him alone, had whispered into his soul,—"These men who despise thee belong to thee; all these windings of that revolution which refuses to acknowledge thee, will find their end in thee, for thou art placed in its path as the inevitable excess whither all impulsion is leading." That man was Robespierre. There are abysses we dare not sound, and characters we dare not investigate, for fear of finding too much darkness and horror; but history, whose eye, like that of time, quails not, cannot be averted by these terrors, and must understand what she undertakes to relate.

Maximilian Robespierre was born at Arras, of a poor, but honest and respectable family; his father, who died in Germany, was of English extraction, a fact which may account for the puritanism which was part of his nature. The

bishop of Arras had undertaken the care of his education, and the young Maximilian was distinguished, on his leaving college, by his studious life and austere manners. Letters, and the bar, occupied his time. His intellect was deeply imbued with the philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau: this philosophy falling on an active will, had by no means remained a dead letter, having become in him a dogma, a faith, a fanaticism. In the strong mind of the sectarian, conviction becomes action. Robespierre was the Luther of politics. In the obscurity of his confused thoughts, he brooded over the renovation of the social and religious worlds, like a dream that was uselessly besieging his youth, when the Revolution came to offer him, what destiny ever offers to those who are watching its progress, opportunity. He seizes it. He was named deputy of the *tiers* in the States General. Alone, perhaps, of all those men who were opening the first scene of this immense drama at Versailles, he had glimpses of its close. Like the human mind, whose seat in the frame philosophers are quite ignorant of, the thoughts of a whole people are sometimes reposed in the most ignorant individual of a vast crowd. No one is to be despised, for the finger of destiny makes its mark on the soul, not on the forehead. Robespierre had nothing, either in his birth, his genius, or his person, to indicate him as worthy of men's notice. No reputation attended on him; his ordinary talents had only spread their halo at the bar, or in the

academies of his province. Some verbose discourses, stuffed with a philosophy nerveless and almost pastoral, some cold and affected poems, had held up his name to no purpose, among other literary insignificance of his day: he was more than unknown,—he was mediocre and despised. His features had nothing to catch the eye as it ranges over a large crowd: nothing was written in physical characters on that thoroughly inner power: he was the last word of the Revolution which no one could read.

Robespierre was of small stature, pock-marked, and angular, with a jerking gait, affected attitudes, and gesticulation unharmonious and ungraceful; his voice, which was rather sharp, sought oratorical inflexions, and only found fatigue and monotony; he had a fine but small forehead, projecting above the temples, as if the mass and the embarassed movement of his thoughts had enlarged it by main force; his eyes, much shaded by his eyelids, and very pointed at the extremities, were deeply sunk in the cavities of their orbits; they shot forth a bluish glance, rather mild, but vague and floating, like the reflection of light on steel; his nose, straight and small, was strongly drawn by raised and very often dilated nostrils; his mouth was large, his lips thin, and disagreeably contracted at the two corners; his chin, short and pointed; his complexion, a livid yellow, like that of an invalid, or of a man consumed by midnight

watchings and meditations. The habitual expression of his visage was a superficial serenity on a grave substratum, and an indefinite smile, between sarcasm and affability. There was mildness, but sinister mildness. The predominant expression of his physiognomy was the prodigious and constant tension of the forehead, the eyes, the mouth,—all the facial muscles. Observing him, you saw that all the traits of his visage, like all the labour of his soul, converged without distraction on a single point, with such power, that there was no waste of will in this character, and that it seemed to foresee what it sought to accomplish, as though it were actually then passing before his eyes.

Such was, at that time, the man who was to absorb into himself all those men, and make them his victims, after having used them as his tools. He was of no party, but of all the parties, which served in their turn his ideal of the Revolution. Therein lay his strength; for parties stood still, he did not. He set this ideal as a goal in the van of each revolutionary movement: he walked with those who were desirous of reaching it; then, when that goal was passed, he removed it still further, and still kept on advancing with other men, continuing thus, without even deviating, or halting, or drawing back. The Revolution, decimated in its progress, was inevitably to be renewed one day in its last expression. He willed that that should be himself. He had incorporated himself with it entirely—principles, thoughts, pas-

sions, anger. Thus incorporating himself with it so thoroughly, he forced it one day to incorporate itself with him. This day was afar off.

[In the day of power, despite the one or two scandalous stories told of Robespierre, as in the case of Madame de St. Amaranthe, who is said to have been sacrificed by him, in revenge for her rejection of his love, Robespierre was actuated, probably, by as pure a sentiment as any ambitious man can entertain. He was free, at least, from the detestably selfish vices of many of his colleagues and predecessors: and his personal character, putting aside his cruelty, would gain by comparison with more than one man of power both before and after him. Like the apostate Julian, we have his character chiefly from his enemies, and their testimony must be carefully weighed before it is adopted. He was unquestionably a staunch democrat. A people's happiness and a sound government were only to be found in his system; and to attain it, it was expedient that the nation should pass through the fire, and that the Revolution should be purified of its grosser particles,—the guillotine being his alembic.

He at least detested war as the obstacle of civilization, as the opponent of liberty, and as the scourge of nations. Such were his thoughts upon the subject as exemplified in some posthumous notes of his discovered, and he carried them out in his zealous opposition to the motion for war brought forward and eventually carried by the Girondins. He was a man of philanthropic views, and wished to establish justice, equality, and fraternity, could he but discover the mode by which the interests of the

rich, the middle class, and the people could be fused into one genial system of welfare.]

In allusion to his quarrel with Danton, Lamartine says.—

* * "Robespierre still hesitated to strike Danton. His indecision, as well as that of Saint Just and Couthon whom he controlled, kept death dangling invisibly over the head of his old rival. Robespierre did not like him, but he did not hate him, and he had ceased to fear him. Had the man been more *incorruptible*, Robespierre would have willingly associated him in the empire. That Anthony would have completed this Lepidus. Danton was gifted by nature with precisely the faculties Robespierre was deficient in: the precision of his *coup d'œil*, and the glance of intuition. The one was the thought, the other the hand of the Revolution. Civil courage was more obstinate in Robespierre: physical bravery more prompt and more instinctive in Danton. These two, in union, would have been the body and soul of the Republic. But Robespierre's ideas were repugnant to an alliance with Danton's impure materialism. 'To mis-match thought is not to strengthen it,' he used to say, 'it is corrupting it. VIRTUE, CONQUERED BUT PURE, IS STRONGER THAN VICE TRIUMPHANT.'"

[What a contradiction to the received notions of Robespierre! but Lamartine continues.—]

A lively anxiety agitated him during the days and nights that preceded his revolution. He was often heard to cry out, "Ah! if Danton were only an honest man! if he were really a republican! How I could wish for the lantern of the Greek philosopher, to read Danton's heart, and know whether he is more the enemy, or the friend of the Republic!"

In his struggle with this, his greatest opponent, who finally sunk before the ascendancy of his genius, Robespierre displayed courage, and even magnanimity. He long hesitated to denounce and arrest him, partly from motives of personal feeling towards his rival; and, when he did at last act, he took upon himself all the responsibility of the step, thereby imperilling his own position, and staking his hazard on the die: for Danton was far more popular than himself; and he had to justify his conduct in the eyes of the people, for the destruction of their favourite; had he failed, he had died. Space will not permit us to dwell at greater length on the actions and character of this, next to Mirabeau, the most remarkable man of the Revolution, but we will give the remarks on the last scene of all in his eventful history.

His deposition by a faction in the Committee of Public Safety—the attempts made in his favour, which, but for the imbecility and drunkenness of Henriot, would have been successful, and have changed the scene—his own indisposition to act, some say from cowardice and

panic—Lamartine quotes his own words—from his preference to die rather than to offend against the law—the entrance of his enemies into his house, and his thirty-six hours' trial and condemnation, suffering torture all the while from a jaw shattered by a pistol ball, as it was untruly said, by himself, in an attempt at suicide—and the close of his career on the scaffold after a procession through an execrating and furious population, eager to see the blood of him who had shed so much—are all known.

Such was the end of Robespierre and his party surprised and immolated in the midst of his manœuvre to reduce terror to law, the Revolution to order, and the Republic to unity. Overthrown by men, some better, others worse than himself, he had the supreme misfortune to die the same day "the terror" finished, and thereby to accumulate on his name even the blood of the tortures he had wished to abolish, and the maledictions of the victims he had sought to save. His death was the date, and not the cause of the cessation of *the terror*. Punishment would have ceased by his triumph, even as it ceased with his own punishment. Divine justice thus dishonoured his repentance, and brought mischance on his good intent; making of his tomb a sealed abyss, and of his memory an enigma whose name history trembles to pronounce, equally fearing to do injustice if she says crime, and to make herself abhorred if she writes virtue. To be both just and instructive, it is necessary to associate

boldly both terms, which clash when united, and to make a compound word of them. Or rather, one must renounce a qualification one despairs of defining. The man was, and will remain undefinable.

There is a design in his existence, and that design is grand,—the reign of reason by democracy. There is a motive,—that motive is divine; a thirst after truth and justice in the law. There is an action,—that action is meritorious; it is the combat to the death against vice, lies, and despotism. There is a devotedness,—and that devotedness is constant, absolute, like an ancient immolation; it is the sacrifice of self, of youth, of repose, of happiness, of ambition, of life, of memory, to his work. Lastly, there is a MEANS, and the means is by turns legitimate or execrable: it is popularity. He caresses the people by their ignoble parties; he exaggerates suspicion; he stimulates envy; he incites rage; envenoms revenge. He opens the veins of the social frame to cure the malady; but he lets the life flow away, pure or impure, with indifference, without throwing himself between the victims and the executioners. He does not seek for evil, he accepts it. He delivers up to what he believes the requirements of the situation, the heads of the King, the Queen, and their innocent sister. He yields up to pretended necessity, the head of Vergniaud; to fear, to dominion, the head of Danton. He permits his name to serve, for eighteen months, as a sign to the scaffold, and as justification to

death. He hopes to redeem at a later day, what never is redeemed—present crime by the sanctity of future institutions. He intoxicates himself with a perspective of felicity to come, while all France is at the moment trembling on the scaffold. He has the vertigo of humanity, and wishes to extirpate with the caustic all the maleficent roots of the social soil. He arrogates the rights of Providence, because he has the sentiment and plan in his imagination. He assumes the functions of God; he wishes to be the exterminating and creating genius of the Revolution, forgetting, that if every man were thus to deify himself, there would be but one man left on the globe, he having been the assassin of all the others! In blood, he seeks the purest doctrines of philosophy; he inspires the future with alarm at the reign of the people, and repugnance to the institution of republicanism—doubting of liberty; and, at last, he falls in his first struggle with "terror," because he has not won by resistance at the commencement; the right and the power to subdue it.

* * * Had Robespierre preserved himself pure and intact from the extravagances of demagogues, till that crisis of exhaustion and remorse, the Republic might have survived, revivified, and triumphed in him. It wanted a regulator; he was only an accomplice. He was preparing the way for its Cromwell * * * The Republic needed a Cato of Utica. Robespierre only left the memory of a Marius without his sword. De-

mocracy needed a glory which should radiate for ever from a man's name on its cradle. Robespierre only called to mind great constancy, great incorruptibility, and great remorse. It was the punishment of the man of the people, of the time, and of the future. A cause is often but the name of a man. The type of democracy must be magnanimous, generous, clement, and incontrovertible as truth.

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